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LIVING INTO WISDOM: TEN WOMEN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES BRIDGING THEIR
FIFTIES INTO MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

by

PATRICIA CLAIRE LESKE



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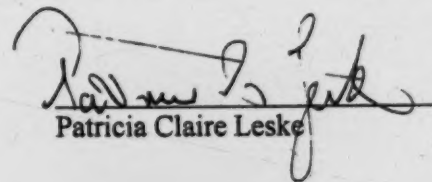
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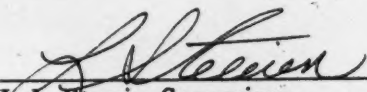
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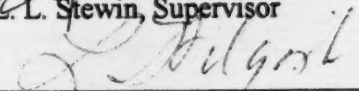
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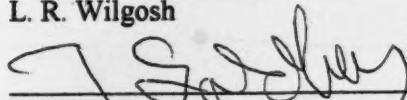
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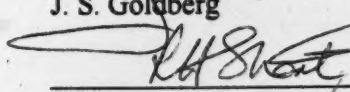
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **LIVING INTO WISDOM: TEN WOMEN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES BRIDGING THEIR FIFTIES INTO MIDDLE ADULTHOOD** submitted by PATRICIA CLAIRE LESKE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.


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IN MEMORIAM

I dedicate this work to Dr. Bruce Bain, my advisor, mentor, and new friend, who suggested the subject of this thesis. It was he who initially undertook the difficult task of guiding, encouraging, at times provoking, but without whose initial vision and high expectations, unwavering support, and faith in my ability, this journey would not have been possible.

ABSTRACT

What is a woman's lifeworld experience as she approaches, and crosses, the bridge into her middle-adult years? This study explores the lifeworld experiences of 10 women from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Bearing in mind the sociocultural, psychosocial, and institutional influences on one's development (Erikson, 1963), and the languaging practices (conversational, written, media, silencing) used to define social spaces and roles, how might a woman effectively bridge this pivotal stage of her life? As the exploration progressed, that question deepened to incorporate another question: *What is each woman's Essence of Self, soul or psyche, her central core?*

Mehan and Wood's (1975) ethnomethodology and Moustakas's (1990, 1994) heuristic phenomenology guide this study. The review of literature highlights the cultural milieu in which a female lives and is gendered towards her socioculturally-defined role. As a woman bridges her 50s, how might this rite of passage unfold? Is there a connecting link between adolescence, young adulthood (20-25), and middle adulthood in this pursuit? If there is anomie (dysfunction), how is it experienced, and why?

Ten women between the ages of 49 and 59 years engage in conversation about this process. Each woman tells her story, in her own voice. As a composite of these 10 women's life experiences, eight primary themes emerged: 1) Socialization, 2) Conscientizing, 3) Personal Tasks, 4) Centering the Self, 5) Self and Relationships, 6) Environmental Relationship Impact, 7) Spiritual Development, and 8) Wisdom.

A woman's adolescent Dream, developmental tasks undertaken when bridging her 50s, and her Essence of Self are connected. Sociocultural and psychosocial gender-construction languaging practices (e.g., voice tone, silencing, body language) blur that Self. Given these composite lifeworld experiences, one needs to distinguish between a woman's cultural-historically constructed role identity and her unique inner Essence of Self. What is the Essence of my Self? then becomes the key question for any woman undertaking a life review as she bridges her middle years into middle adulthood. Defining that Self is the key to continuing self-actualization, not only of one's own, but of one's social world.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	1
Definition of Terms	1
Beginnings: Conversations and Reflections	2
Why the Authorship of Oneself may Become a Problem	3
The role of language	5
How the Authorship of Oneself may Pose a Challenge	6
 CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF LITERATURE	 9
Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model	10
Experiencing Proximal Processes: Biopsychological Development and Education	14
Creating Cultures' Woman: Gender Imprinting	16
The American Professional Class Feminine Gender	17
The American Working Class Feminine Gender	22
The Australian Feminine Gender	27
Experiencing high school education: the "sexing" of the Australian "modern" girl	30
The role of the media	31
Environmental Impact: Young Adult Identity—Social Role and Self in Relationship	32
The Australian 1950s+ Woman	32
The American 1950s+ Woman	34
Erikson: Sociocultural and Individual Anomie	36
Constructing the Contemporary Culture	36
The Socioeconomic Spaces and two Interpretations of Anomie	36
Durkheim held the transcendental viewpoint.	37
Durkheim's ideal society	37
Durkheim's role for women	38
Guyau's view was immanistic	40
Guyau's ideal society	40
Present time	40
Psychological Perspectives on Adult Development	41
Psychological Theories on Adult Development	42
Jung: Swiss-European pioneer	42
Erikson: European-born American psychoanalyst	43
Levinson: an American social psychologist	46
Maslow: American psychologist	49
Some Psychological, Sociological, and Personal Perspectives on Middle Life	
Issues and Challenges	49
The Medium is Language	55
Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule: the Female, Language, and Context	56
A choice: responsiveness towards the Self	58

CHAPTER III - METHOD	60
Method	61
Framing the Question	62
Ethnomethodology: Slanting One's Perspective	63
How were Mehan and Wood Instrumental in this Research?	65
Why the Hermeneutic-Dialectic approach?	67
Interweaving my Question Using Phenomenological Methodology	68
What is Involved in the Altering of Perceptions? Why Might it be Threatening?	70
What appears to be script?	70
What appears to be form?	70
Heuristic Research	72
Theoretical Foundation	72
Application	73
The Participants	75
The Researcher as "Reality Participant"	76
Data Collection	76
Data Analysis	77
Reliability, Validity and Control for Bias	80
Delimitations	81
Ethical Considerations	81
 CHAPTER IV - TEN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES	 82
Crossing the Bridge into Middle Adulthood	82
Jacqueline	82
Overview	87
Some Consequences of Sociocultural Expectations	88
Expectations within her community	88
Expectations within her marriage	89
The impact of sociocultural expectations	90
Renegotiating her identity	91
The Significance of Mentoring and Modelling	93
Redefining Identity: Some Refocusing Issues	94
Losses	95
Reciprocity and the ethic of self-care	95
Using the Stepping Stones	97
A challenge: the role of her family support system	97
A challenge: her initiative and the economic imperative	98
Towards the Commonweal: Generativity and Ego Integrity	98
The circle of time	99
Synopsis: Towards her Future	99
Jacqueline fills her own cup	100
Cultural building blocks	100
Emily	101
Overview	105
Anomie: Traumas and Triggers	108

Personal Involvement	110
Assessing the loss	110
A crisis confronted	110
A crisis overcome	111
Leadership skills	112
Risk	112
Resiliency	113
Pathfinder	113
The Significance of Community	114
The role of her day-to-day associations	114
The role of group support—her therapeutic community	115
Personal Growth Through Loss	116
The intuitive and aesthetic impact	116
The Outcome	117
Growth in relationship	117
Towards an Essence of Self	117
Sophia	118
<i>What challenges Sophia?</i>	124
Generativity	126
How she Resolved her Dilemma	126
Finding one's Corner-stone: the Power of Initiative	127
Whither now?	128
Key Themes	129
The Essence of Self: Stifling its Knowing	130
Towards an Essence of Self: Voicing Intentional Knowing	130
A Moratorium of a Self	132
Sophia's Way	132
Margaret	134
Overview	139
Relationships and the Ethic of Caring	141
A Sense of Community	141
Spousal Relationship	142
Margaret	143
Anomie: Margaret's Developmental Challenge	143
Coping and Surviving Towards Ultimately Thriving	145
Coping	145
Surviving	145
Thriving: a catalyst experience	147
Social Spaces: the Significance of a Community	148
Psychic Capital Enabling Ego Integrity	149
Stepping on her Progress Stones	149
Essence of a Self	150
Fenebee	151
Overview	157
Fenebee's Experiences of Anomie in Identity Foreclosure	158

A crisis point	159
Poverty, practicality, and perseverance: poverty	160
Practicality in "blind obedience"	160
Perseverance: the tenacity of creativity	161
Heeding one's Culture: Socioreligious Cultural Change	162
Intuition and logic: personality as affect	162
Intuitive action	162
Logical adaptation: deferring artistic gratification	163
The Flow of Creativity: Following Imaginative Pathways	164
Altruism, art and the spiritual as one Self	164
A Moratorium	165
Living on the edge	166
What is the fear that holds her captive?	166
Julia	168
Overview	176
Julia's Experiences of Anomie	178
The Question that Became her Life Direction and her Quest	179
Her Essence of Self: Inner Momentum	179
Towards the Commonweal	182
Honing her Values	183
Leadership: Focusing on Potential	184
Environmental Influence, Sociocultural Exclusion and Inclusion	186
Towards her Future	188
Ego integrity or despair?	189
Maslow's hierarchy of needs	190
Maslow and Erikson	190
Julia's Essence of Self	191
Her "Now" Moment	191
Ellen	191
Sketching a Portrait: Adolescence and Young Adulthood	199
Future Choices	201
A Personality Thriving: "a Series of Little Epiphanies"	203
Intimacy and isolation	203
Generativity in intimacy and volunteer labour	203
The Spectre of Ageism	204
One woman's experience	204
Ellen's anomic crisis	205
Ellen's challenge	206
Ageism: Reconstructing a Woman's Institutional Image	207
"Old(er)" is a social construct as is "adolescence"	208
How was this attempted?	208
Devaluation: social spaces and time zones	209
Devaluation: verbal power	209
An Identity in Crisis and Recovery	210
"I am seeing what my hands can teach me now."	210

Miranda	211
A Profile	215
Choices and Consequences	216
Miranda's Dilemma	218
Personal Anomie and the Impact of Negativity	220
A Strength Targeted—Miranda's Intuitive Sense	221
Another Strength Targeted: Miranda's Free-Spirited Autonomy	222
Losses	222
The Shrinking of Psychic Space	223
One interpretative observation	224
Nevertheless, the personal is political	225
Miranda's Challenge: Ego Integrity or Ego Despair?	225
The body as a signal to the self	226
Reinstating her Identity Toward Ego Integrity	226
Sociocultural support roles: the community	227
A professional assists	227
Afterword	228
Malen	229
Overview	235
Challenges, Choices, and Courage	237
Whose Identity is it?	238
Malen's experiences with anomie	238
The significance of voice	240
A sixth developmental voice: one's body	241
Stepping Stones: From Surviving to Authenticity	242
The Issue is Values	246
New Beginnings: a Personally Chosen Identity	247
Iris	250
Foreword	255
Iris's crisis: her anomie	255
Essence of Self	256
Praxis: Conscientizing her Reality	256
Betrayal of intimacy: a husband's rejection	256
Psychosocial costs of the ethic of caring	258
Removing the myths	259
Retrieving her character strengths: the political is personal	260
Acknowledging loss	261
Towards Ego Integrity Within Generativity	261
Initiative and independence	261
Identity: recognition and ownership	262
Internalized psychosocial enablers	263
Psychosocial enablers: the role of external support systems and players	263
Professional one-gender group therapy	263
Women's therapy: an eclectic approach	264
The therapeutic role of laypersons: family and friends	265

A Synopsis and a Prelude	268
CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION	269
Woman Aging, and her adolescent Dream	269
The Sociocultural and Psychosocial Construction of Female as Young Adult	270
Conscientizing the Self	273
Conscientizing her Self: the Pressure of Social Power	277
Personal Tasks	279
Ten Women's Adolescent Dream and the Years 20-25	279
Middle Life Social Spaces and Identity	281
The Pressure of Social Power: the Purpose, and Plan of Ageism	283
Ageism and the Social Self	284
Women's Wisdom Journey: Centering the Self	284
Middle Adulthood Voice, Identity, and Social Spaces	284
The Self in Relationship	286
Restorative Power	286
Ego Integrity Maintained	286
Unfolding the Process	287
Challenge in Choice	288
Middle Life Transitional Crisis: Biology and Body	288
The Significance of Female Body as Voice at Middle Adulthood	289
Sourcing one's energy core	290
Listening to one's intuitive self	290
Environmental Relationship Impact on a Woman's Development	292
Female Life-Stage Development: the Role of Mentors in Personally and/or	
Professionally Staying Connected or Reconnecting	292
The Reciprocity of Friendship	293
Mothers	294
Husbands and Children	295
Sharing one's Leadership Potential	295
Spiritual Development	296
Wisdom	298
Wisdom in Joy and Contentment	299
BIBLIOGRAPHY	301
APPENDICES	314
Appendix A: Gender Conceptualization	314
The "World" Context: individual psychosocial identity	315
Appendix B: Erikson's Epigenetic Chart	316
Appendix C: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	317
Appendix D: Questions that guided the interview process	318
Appendix E: Letter of Consent	319
Appendix F: J. Erikson's Adaptation of E. Erikson's Stages (Old Age)	320
Appendix G: Data analysis sample	321
Appendix G: Interview sample	328

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Anomie. American 1960s academic publications generally viewed anomie from opposite poles. Sociologists labeled socially confused and alienated adolescents as suffering from anomie—the problem, normlessness. Psychologists tended to view anomie as a society's dysfunction. Erikson, for example, held that long-range dysfunction or anomie highlighted the “defects in the ‘fiber’ of generations and institutions” (1964, pp. 139-140). In the context of this study, confronted with lessened opportunities and social spaces, a female's anomie is a crisis of personal confusion caused by the deprivation of Maslow's self-actualization. In this study, I also view a woman's anomie as a positive force, indicative of a healthy psyche. A woman bridging her 50th year may experience anomie as a necessary agent in the change process towards ego integrity and wisdom.

Conscientization. An awakening of consciousness and the critical self-assertion into reality.

The Dream. I use the term to indicate each woman's hoped for life-goal, her self-definition, her identity.

Educaré. To lead out.

Essence of Self. I interpret this as a woman's authentic voice and unique psyche, soul, or inner core, possibly identified by her adolescent Dream or hoped-for life goal.

Languaging. A comprehensive term to cover words, voice tone, pauses, sighs, silences, tears, laughter, facial expression, body language, and silencing.

Lifeworld. An individual's sensemaking of everyday relationships and events. It involves cognitive, affective, and physiognomic knowing.

Praxis. Reflection and action.

(The) Religious. A term within the Catholic church for those involved in the religious professions.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

My intention is to lift out ideas and meanings from life experiences that hold individual and universal significance and that facilitate person-to-person interactions, connections that give birth to new awareness, and encourage pathways to expression of feelings and values. (Moustakas, 1995, p. ix)

I am exploring developmental processes and pathways of 10 women from three different countries (Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), as they reach and cross the bridge towards their middle years. A woman's *personal* lifeworld experience during these important years is a lesser explored area of research in adult psychological development. Each woman tells her own story, in her own voice. My aim is to further the understanding and appreciation of this segment of the human life cycle by including the female, and to demonstrate how self-actualization is achieved.

Beginnings: Conversations and Reflections

In the early 1990s, I chatted with an 80-year-old Australian woman. A scholarship winner, despite her wishes, she did not attend high school. As the eldest daughter of ethnic homesteaders, her parents wanted her to work at home. Poverty was not the reason, custom intervened. Women married. Of what practical use was a high school education for a woman who, once married, would not work? Gifted musically, she was permitted one year of voice training. She maximized on this one year of instruction, singing semi-professionally at weddings and concerts when younger and in choirs into her 70s.

She has made choices. In her early 50s, she began china painting, woodworking, and floral art. During her 75th year, she stopped constructing large pieces of furniture. Now worsening osteoporosis meant a further curtailment—this time of creating the large floral arrangements for special community and church functions. I asked how she felt about it. "Good," she said, "when I look around our home at what I've done, I can't believe I did all that! But I'm ready now to concentrate on my garden. I haven't stopped everything. I've decided what I can manage now." Commenting that a woman seems to experience some social closure during her late 40s, she agreed. "To get to this point I had to be very determined, I had to know my own mind."

"The authorship of oneself as an old(er) woman is serious business." (Freuh, 1994, p. 276).

Why the Authorship of Oneself May Become a Problem

Sooner or later we each come face to face with ourselves in the faceless lane of life. Tragically, for some individuals, it begins in childhood or during one's adolescence. For some it is a job termination. It may be professionally imposed when one is enviously perceived by one's profession as too extraordinary, like the nationally known Canadian architect, Douglas Cardinal. He then "found the strength within his native faith when he struggled against financial ruin and professional controversy," and has become a nationally known figure (Bonisteel, 1989). For males, it may be the panic of midlife and beyond, when youth appears to have left, aging hovers, anxiety magnifies, and they wonder what they have accomplished to realize immortality (Erikson, 1978; Jung, 1930/1976; Levinson, 1978). For women, the trauma may occur at the ending of their reproductive cycle, aging being now socially prescribed (Davis, 1989; Freuh, 1994; Lewin, 1982; Rosenthal, 1990).

For women as they age, the intersection of ageism with sexism can be devastating in circumscribing their activities and controlling their self-image. The varieties of ageism affecting women grow out of sex role stereotypes and discrimination combined with ideas about the nature of the middle-aged and old. . . . I am confident that our challenge to patriarchal constructions of women's nature has begun to make a difference in the way young women live their lives. It is time to accept a new challenge aimed at transforming older women's lives. (Rosenthal, 1990, pp. 1, 2)

A male colleague some years ago encapsulated his experience and reflections of his weekend experience counselling a male group on an Alcoholics Anonymous retreat. Nearing middle adulthood himself, he commented, "Men approaching the middle years choose to move towards relationship and intimacy or, it seems, become alcoholics, workaholics, spouse abusers or have an affair." As I was then becoming aware of negative comments about my age, personality, and behavior that I perceived as unwarranted, I answered: "And, it seems, women are to resort to medication, to become the stereotypical grandmother, or to defy." In a later conversation with a vivacious older professor friend, she, possibly sensing my confusion and annoyance, replied, "Women must do some of all three, but especially, defy!" At varying life stages, we all confront life's reality that one does not determine all of one's destiny. Approaching the middle years, traditionally negatively portrayed by society

more dramatically for females, some women are determined to push beyond the norm. Not unlike an artist creating, these women, as do the 10 women in this study, wish to live their lives uniquely. Creating something of themselves anew out of their internalisation and interpretation of the structure and events surrounding and influencing them is the alternative to eventual regret and despair (Erikson, 1964). One notes the 80-year-old woman's intellectual and artistic adolescent potential lying fallow in a virtual cultural wasteland. One notes the personal courage and strength, her resiliency and perseverance that enabled her sense of accomplishment. One senses the dignity and integrity that surrounds her life. As this elderly woman did, one chooses to return to the adolescent period of one's life, to retrieve a Dream and confront a challenge. This proactive response may initially cause personal anomie. Not only is this woman dealing with unfinished and unresolved issues within herself, but viewed from the outside by those who know her, she has become somewhat out of focus; their internalised image of her is blurring. Possibly at the unconscious level, she is threatening their complacency of how they view themselves and of how she views them. It is they who do not want her to change.

This determined effort to progress along life's journey, to follow a process of inner direction (likely defying some conventions of social conformity), Moustakas (1995) names *the firebrand* personality. Jung (1961/1965) names this process of inwardly exploring one's undeveloped talents and acting on them *individuation*. Horney (1956) names it *self-realization*, while Maslow (1954) refers to all of the above processes as *self-actualization*. Moving beyond the individual to incorporate the culture one lives within, its myths and its values, Erikson (1963-1997 publications) concentrates on the psychosocial developmental tasks at each stage of one's development—person in/and society clearly shown on his epigenetic chart (see Appendix B). As Maslow's hierarchy of needs highlights the sociocultural influences/intentions on an individual's motivation and character development, a comparison can be made between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Erikson's epigenetic chart. Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows both the individual qualities and character values required to self-actualize *together with* the obstructions or assistance by one's sociocultural

surroundings (fellow humankind—see Appendix C). Maslow's growth needs, his aesthetic and cognitive meta-needs, indicate an individual's innate strivings towards Erikson's psychosocial generativity and ego integrity issues. Erikson's texts challenge adults to responsibly interact culturally—to mentor, guide, and encourage younger members, both within individual family units and institutionally. He has written extensively on the link between dysfunctional adults within dysfunctional institutional environments, and dysfunctional youths (1964, 1968). The medium is language.

The role of language. Language links the individual to society through word choice, images, sound, gestures, and silence, both environmentally and within an individual's mind theatre playing out the events in dialogue, pantomime and reflection.

Voice is central to our way of working—our channel of connection, a pathway that brings the inner psychic world of feelings and thoughts out into the open air of relationship where it can be heard by oneself and by other people. . . . Voice because it is embodied, connects rather than separates psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and culture. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 20)

Ultimately one's values, choices, decision-making, and one's motivation are influenced, even as one influences. "Voice is inherently relational—one does not require a mirror to hear oneself—yet the sounds of one's voice change in resonance depending on the relational acoustics" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 20). These overtly and covertly controlled languaging practices may disable or enable an individual's potential culturally within all institutions, especially the value-based centres of family and religious institutions, and the politically constructed learning centres (see Appendix A). Learning, then, is not necessarily *educaré*. Vygotsky's (1986) and Freire's (1970, 1994) research enables insights into this process. Their conscientizing of an individual's lifeworld clearly shows how malleable an individual becomes when languaging practices are not only used manipulatively but exploitatively to intentionally lock individuals within specific social spaces. So, where does the female *fit*?

Issues of language have defined one's femaleness, one's social identity, and one's Self

within those social spaces (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1985; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). Therefore, a woman may experience a vague disquiet and a feeling of restlessness as she bridges her 50th year if the issues of individuation, of self-realization, self-actualization, of generativity and ego integrity come to the fore. If not formerly considered, she may now conscientize both her Self and her social interactions. What words, images, and silencing techniques have situated her within her social spaces and how has this affected her internalized self-view intellectually, affectively, spiritually, bodily and therefore economically and politically? What are her daily experiences as she engages in languaging practices with intimates, friends and, possibly, colleagues? If she undertakes a life review, she may realise rather devastatingly that what "society rewards are won at the cost of a diminution of the personality" (Jung, 1933, p. 104). Perhaps even worse, she may realise that this "diminution of personality" is to increase. Consequently, as this study will show, how she negotiates this critical time largely determines her psychological wellbeing during her remaining years.

How the Authorship of Oneself May Pose a Challenge

As shall be reviewed in Chapter II, internalizing her female role (defined by her sexuality) during her years of compulsory pre-adolescent and adolescent schooling, an adult female may live on the parameters, fulfilling her social role. At the second pivotal turning point, approaching and crossing the bridge into middle adulthood, some women select, retrieve, and concentrate on a partially developed talent or interest. As with the 80-year-old's experience as she approached and entered her middle years, these woman may need to be quite determined. Society rewards status-quo thinking and defined gender roles. Contrarily, such women likely will be moving against the stream. Yet a woman's decisions now determines whether her life will ultimately be one of aging and aged despair or one of personal and communal integrity and energy (Erikson, 1997; Heilbrun, 1997; Jung, 1930/1976).

Unfortunately, still today, a female may threaten the traditionally oriented institutions if

perceived as crossing her gender-role line (Belenky et al., 1985; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Levinson, 1986; McBride, 1995; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). For the reality is that while there *are* homes where mutuality and egalitarianism are genuinely the concern and practice, the reinforcing agencies within cultures—educators, professional hierarchies of world religions, lawyers, and politicians—in the main have not affectively conscientized themselves beyond the traditional viewpoints. However, in the words of McBride, “Patriarchal culture has been challenged intellectually and culturally through the advent of feminist(s), even if politically and economically women still remain largely disempowered” (1995, p. 120).

Nevertheless, a conscientized woman bridging middle adulthood moves beyond those gender influences and roles, those institutional and language barriers. She also wishes to influence her culture, to facilitate persons of the same age and older than she, perhaps to become a mentor to the younger generations of both sexes. As shall be seen, it will require a deliberated intent, a choice, and a redirection—no matter how seemingly insignificant (or threatening) externally. Unless this interior, reflective journey is undertaken, wisdom or ego integrity will not be attainable—she must reflect, select, return, and retrieve the unfinished task (Erikson, 1978). This woman will integrate the preparatory groundwork of childhood and adolescence, the generative beginnings of adulthood. Above all, it will require the quietitude of inner courage and an intuitive awareness of her body (May, 1972). For one’s mind, using cognitively plausible rationalizing, can choose to delude itself with lies, whereas one’s body does not self-delude. It warns. For our body, together with our affect, is also our consciousness, our mind the messenger.

In 1982, Gilligan wrote, “Among the most pressing items on the agenda for research on adult development is the need to delineate *in women’s own terms* the experience of their adult life” (p. 173). This study presents a number of women speaking about their lifeworlds, the issues they confronted as they approached and moved through the age of 50. Bearing in mind the sociocultural and psychosocial influences within institutions toward both genders, and

the role of language in defining social spaces and roles, how does a woman effectively bridge this pivotal era of her life? In Chapter IV, 10 women relate *their* process, each giving us a brief glimpse of what may be involved.

CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical constructs of the 1950s determining a female's socialization within the patriarchal institutions at the time these 10 women were adolescents and young-adult women are the focus and intention of this literature review. Although cognisant of contemporary feminist scholastic analyses of these writings, I intentionally have, in the main, omitted them. My focus, and emphasis, is on the outcome of these 1950s theoretical "facts" in the lived reality of 10 women. I did not wish to risk the feminist voices of scholarship lessening the grassroots truths of women experiencing patriarchal assumptions outside of the halls of academia. By sharing their lifeworld experiences, 10 women outside of scholastic debate offer insights—and a critical analysis of—the meaningfulness and accuracy of these 1950s mandated theoretical "truths."

This study is not a critique of theorists' writings about women and aging, using a number of women's experiences to emphasize a point. Nor is the emphasis on how a number of women felt about themselves (changing appearance, self, and community reactions) as they approached and crossed over their 50th year. Instead, this study focuses on 10 women's innermost adolescent ambition (the Dream), on the adult identity each had wished to pursue, and at the time of the interview—entering middle adulthood—how this Dream assists in the rediscovery of the Essence of a Self, of authenticity, integrity, and continuing inclusion within the social spaces.

Every person is born within a context. Despite the illusion of constancy, every institutional context is continually in a state of flux as hierarchically and competitively oriented individuals vie for dominance, power, economic status, and control of that environment. To further complicate reality, every individual inherits a biopsychological, psychosocial, and psychohistorical predisposition that influences interpersonal and intrapsychic interactions and outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Erikson, 1964; Vygotsky, 1986). Languaging practices, both interpersonal and intrapsychic, have a profound impact upon every

individual's and ultimately a culture's psychological degree of function along a continuum.

For these reasons, this literature review briefly overviews the context within which a female has traditionally been gendered. However, as a critique of gender is not the issue, but rather a female's development across a segment of her life history, the focus is on a specific segment of time, beginning with institutional intentions during her adolescence to transform her from a girl to cultural womanhood. This transformation may focus her energies away from her Essence of Self, causing varying degrees of disquiet. Erikson's (1964) belief that individual anomie or dysfunction highlights the "defects in the 'fiber' of generations and institutions" (pp. 139-140) stimulated my researching the constructing of such dysfunction. A brief overview of Durkheim's (1897/1951) recommended solution to the problem of a dysfunctional society follows. Psychological theories on adult development, and issues and challenges a woman may confront as she approaches her 50th year, are viewed. As the initial tool used to construct a female away from her Self must be identified, and then personally adapted towards her taking charge and redirecting her life, the role of language closes this chapter. The chapter also incorporates a number of life-review segments from both the psychological and sociological texts. This somewhat unusual approach is necessary, as a major component of this study involves following the threads and patterns of personal and environmental events in a number of women's lives leading towards their ongoing development.

A brief sketch of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model provides this study's theoretical context: every individual attempts to thrive within a world, culture, and pod context(s) and to varying degrees acts out and fulfils his or her potential. Bronfenbrenner's self-study within the context of his theoretical approach and research design is therefore particularly significant. I discovered Bronfenbrenner's contextual perspective (1995, chap. 18, 19) while working on revisions following the first critique of this study, and noted the synchronicity between his theoretical context, research design, and Appendix A.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model

Bronfenbrenner's professional goal is to "enhanc(e) the scientific understanding of the conditions and forces shaping human development through the life course" (1995, p. 621). Within his "*process-person-context-time*" (PPCT) research design, "proximal processes [play] 'the key role'" (p. 621). Nevertheless, while proximal processes may be "the developmental power," maximising one's potential is contingent not only upon self-motivation and ability, but also factors within the environment at any one time (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 626; Erikson, 1963; Maslow, 1954; Vygotsky, 1934/1986).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1995), throughout his or her lifespan, every individual's abilities, interests, behaviors, and values are enabled or disabled by fellow people players within and across economically and politically constructed class hierarchies with the assistance of educational institutions. There are environmental consequences, as the strengths and weaknesses of any culture are interpersonally and intrapsychologically values-connected.

Furthermore, it is not simply behavioral patterns and reactions at issue, but the transmitting of values that at times is contested, complicated by what Bronfenbrenner calls "biopsychological characteristics." These biopsychological characteristics are the innate and individually unique qualities of "temperament, personality, neurobiological and biochemical makeup, and cognitive functioning" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 633). And, he continues, once formal education begins, they are further confounded by the addition of professional and peer pressure on one's performance and degree of motivation. In other words, each individual's innate biopsychological characteristics can only be maximised with the support of the environment (political stability, economic resources, educational opportunities, family and group environments). Life's successes and disappointments then extend beyond one's personal "psychological force" (e.g., motivation, initiative, tenacity) or biopsychological characteristics (p. 635). Moreover,

The lives of all family members are interdependent. Hence, how each family member

reacts to a particular historical event or role transition affects the developmental course of the other family members, both within and across generations. (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 642).

Family dynamics significantly impact on one's ongoing development. Development is a process that continues within additional contexts across one's lifespan: Bronfenbrenner provides an autobiographical sketch that underwrites both his theory and this PPCT research model (1995, chap. 18).

Bronfenbrenner's highly educated Russian-born American immigrant parents maintained an intellectually and conversationally rich home environment that continues to frame his life. Both parents spoke respectfully of well-known Russian psychologists, his mother holding Vygotsky in highest regard. Russian-born psychologists seeking political refuge also were frequent guests in their home. His physician and neuropathologist father worked in a mental institution, Bronfenbrenner occasionally accompanying him. Through observation and later in conversation, he experienced his father's frustration that many of the children court-diagnosed as mentally defective were normal when first admitted. From him he learned that measurement is only one component of psychology, that diagnosis also involves conversation, observation and careful listening. Moreover, his father not only shared his knowledge of the human but also the natural world with his son, and invited comments, opinions, and questions. Bronfenbrenner, in turn, modelled these adults' gregarious inclusion, forming close peer friendships in his transplanted environment, and "in a manner of weeks turned into an American kid" (1995, pp. 602-3). Correspondingly, as his home environment enlarged his intellectual and ethical sensitivities, so he assisted his parents towards an understanding of the American social milieu.

As an adult, Bronfenbrenner's intellectual and relational Self acquired from his childhood and adolescent socialization continues to impact the environment. Peer friendship experiences of his childhood and adolescence remain influential. Trusted colleagues "criticize early and successive drafts before [he] submit[s] any manuscript for publication"

(1995, p. 603). He models his father's Socratic style in the classroom, while his interdisciplinary approach to psychology appears to have originated from their detailed conversations and nature walks. He extended the gestalt concept brought to America by Russian-psychologist immigrants to patterns within life contexts across time. Above all, Bronfenbrenner expanded Vygotsky's (1986) concept of the zone of proximal development beyond a knowledgeable adult maximizing a child's potential (Bronfenbrenner's experience), to "proximal processes" influencing and impacting on individuals across generations irrespective of age, every institution and individual being interactively accountable.

The preceding encapsulated segments of Bronfenbrenner's life history have a direct bearing on this study. He has shown how one's biopsychological makeup may be shaped developmentally by earlier experiences. He clarifies the role these experiences may play during a later developmental stage, although "upon their reentry on the stage in what amounts to the last act of a particular developmental drama, these characteristics are typically given a far more restricted role" (1995, p. 635). With fortitude and cooperation, one may overturn previous disappointments and extend earlier successes. Three of Bronfenbrenner's comments shall be addressed in varying depths throughout this study:

- In reviewing research using his model, Bronfenbrenner noticed few studies that addressed the environmental influences, "the proximal processes" on an individual's biopsychological beginnings, and of those, most "have been carried out with children and adolescents; almost none have been conducted with adults. . . . [Moreover], most investigations of this kind that do exist are confined to two personal characteristics of limited explanatory power: age and gender" (1995, pp. 629-633). Perhaps ten women's stories and analyses will add further insights. Accomplishment is not a lone journey. Reviewing a number of women's lifeworld experiences as they enter middle adulthood, while incorporating age and gender, in reality explores the influences of proximal processes upon realizing that adolescent Dream, that authenticity and integrity of the Essence of Self.

●Validating one study, Bronfenbrenner asks whether it "is the values or the behaviors that constitute the more critical carriers of cross-generational transmissions" (1995, p. 631). Yet throughout his model and theoretical discussion, he omits any reference to the role religious influences play. Two of the 10 women in Chapter IV specifically highlight these.

●And finally, "still untested," Bronfenbrenner hypothesises that proximal processes will be more important than social class "but that the magnitude of this power will be systematically reduced or enhanced as a joint function both of the mother's beliefs about her own or her child's competence, and of the family's social class status" (1995, p. 631-632). Does "the mother's beliefs" hold such power status, and does "the family's social class status" imply a father's social power, inadequacy or failure? Perhaps one needs to consider the mother's role (her institutional value) and the family's social status (environmental constructivism).

Experiencing Proximal Processes: Biopsychological Development and Education

In the light of Bronfenbrenner's slant on proximal processes, how might the environment impact upon a female's biopsychological development within educational institutions? What might have been compulsory education's role in 10 women's sociohistorical and sociocultural conditioning of the girl to her culture's "woman?"

In a 1977 Convocation address *Claiming an Education*, Rich, an American poet, university lecturer, and feminist theorist, challenged each woman graduate to think, discern, and act with integrity towards not only her mind but also her body, to celebrate her unique self, and to take responsibility for developing her potential (1979, pp. 231-235). Aware of the cultural script that applauds various female roles detrimental to self-actualization, Rich challenged the young women to assume a "shared commitment toward a world in which the inborn potentialities of many women's minds will no longer be wasted, raveled away, paralyzed, or denied" (p. 235). The following year Rich addressed women in academia. She saw no

connection between a woman's biology and her feeling of powerlessness. She advocated women define their own context, research their own world history, value their own experiences, develop a female perspective, discuss and challenge ideas, and above all listen "for silences . . . for there we will find the true knowledge of women" (p. 245).

The undermining of her self, of a woman's sense of her right to occupy space and walk freely in the world, is deeply relevant to education. The capacity to think independently, to take intellectual risks, to assert ourselves mentally, is inseparable from our physical way of being in the world, our feelings of personal integrity. (Rich, 1979, p. 242)

It does not mean adopting the male model. It means "thinking of ourselves seriously, not as one of the boys, not as neuters, or androgynes, but as women" (Rich, 1979, p. 240).

How does a woman gain a sense of her self in a system—in this case patriarchal capitalism—which devalues work done by women, denies the importance and uniqueness of female experience, and is physically violent toward women? (Rich, 1979, p. 239)

Rich asks the question. Sharing their lived experiences, ten women will answer her.

For 1200 years, male voices and lenses recorded the female's psychohistory. Lerner, an American historian, researched the period of Western European and American women's history from 7 A.D. to 1870, when "significant numbers of women attained feminist consciousness, a moment marked by the appearance of organized movements for women's rights" (1993, p. 13). She concentrated on the defining of women's sociocultural, economic, and political gender identity within the institutions of family, church, and education. What Lerner uncovered was that the female, denied equal access to constructed knowledge and ideological debate in both secular and religious educational institutions and scholastic circles, remained marginalized, economically, politically, and spiritually dependent on the male. "Patriarchal thinkers constructed their edifice the way patriarchal statesmen constructed their states: by defining who was to be kept out" (p. 282). Denied access to a university until 1866, the recorded ideas of those few women who left a legacy were lost or kept hidden (e.g., Hildegard of Bingen, a multi-talented, educated, and influential 12th-

century nun).

Without knowledge of women's past, no group of women could test their own ideas against those of their equal. . . . Every thinking woman had to argue with the "great man" in her head, instead of being strengthened and encouraged by her foremothers. For thinking women, the absence of Women's History was perhaps the most serious obstacle of all to their intellectual growth. (Lerner, 1993, p. 12)

Nevertheless, Lerner's research reveals how women mystics, writers and poets created their own spaces outside of the patriarchal zones. Within these spaces, women formed their own networks, sharing ideas, becoming involved in creative projects, discussion circles, and social causes.

The socialization of male and female is both present-time sociocultural and sociohistorical, and past-time psychosocial and psychohistorical (Erikson, Vygotsky). What Lerner uncovers is the absence until recently of intellectual discussions that include a female's lifeworld perspective and ideas within the patriarchally constructed male-elite institutions. "The intellectual emancipation of women [university lecturers, researchers, and students], has shattered the solid monopoly men have held so long over theory and definition"(p. 283). There is now Women's History (Martin, 1985; Rich, 1979; Woolf, 1929).

We stand at the beginning of a new epoch in the history of humankind's thought, as we recognize that sex is irrelevant to thought, that gender is a social construct and that woman, like man, makes and defines history. (Lerner, 1993, p. 283)

Creating a Culture's Woman: Gender Imprinting

What is the cultural milieu in which a female lives? As Lerner's research showed, under patriarchy, irrespective of exceptions within females as a group, all females are a part of the subordinate group, the institutional roles of both education and religion (designed, assigned, and maintained) to keep them there.

In this section, authors expose the psychological construction of a female deemed appropriate for her future economic role and social status. There are similarities between

and across the 1950s "modern girl" and the 1990s "perfect girl," as the adult women researchers of the "perfect girl" at times recalled their own adolescent "dissociation and disconnection which play a central role in women's psychological lives" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 17).

We begin with twelve-year-old Anna because she stands at the edge of adolescence. We will mark this place as a crossroads in women's development: a meeting between girl and woman, an intersection between psychological health and cultural regeneration, a watershed in women's psychology which affects both women and men. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 1)

The American Professional Class Feminine Gender

In Brown and Gilligan's (1992) text, *Meeting at the Crossroads*, 100 girls attending a private girls' school in North America were interviewed over a 5-year span. Their ages ranged from 7-15 years, the developmental stages of childhood, pre-adolescence, and young adolescence, i.e., the years of compulsory education. Verbal sketches illustrate not only a cross-section of the classrooms, but profile the in-depth experiences of a number of individual members of that class body. As questions draw out a mother's influence and interest in this girl's development, one notices a male shadow figure orchestrating the relationship between mother and daughter, sons and brothers. Seemingly unobtrusive, distant and disinterested, much like a master puppeteer, he negotiates the strings of the movements and dances not only of his children, but those of his wife. Thus the authors record how "adolescence precipitates a developmental crisis in girls' lives . . . a dark continent in women's development—a crisis of relationship which has been covered over by lies" (pp. 6-7).

The crisis involves a struggle between the authentic Self and the gendered self, of genuine relationships and authentic communication vs. image and social talk, or "the chasm between what they know about relationship through experience and what is socially constructed as Relationship within a male-voiced culture" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 29). School and home are the two institutions under scrutiny. The authors record females experiencing the process of transformation from the girl to the culture's woman. They observe and record the

motive, the cultural intention. A girl is to become desensitized from the Self she knows.

Specifically we are referring to the encouragement of self-sacrifice or self-silencing and the holding out of purity and perfection as conditions for relationship and the mark of good women, in the case of the feminine ideal, and, in the case of the masculine ideal, the encouragement of self-aggrandizement and the desire to be in the dominant position, to be in control. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 30)

(How the process is accomplished, with what results, becomes a point of comparison with 10 women's experiences towards and entering middle adulthood. The young girl is entering her reproductive years, the woman entering middle adulthood is exiting them).

By observing girls entering puberty and adolescence, and following their journeys, the authors reveal the girl inside the woman. The researchers uncover psychological wellness (the clarity of a healthy psyche, of functional behavior) and the beginnings of possible dysfunction, socioculturally prescribed. As described, 10- and 11-year-old girls enter cognisant and comfortable with relationships, intellectually and affectively self-aware and outgoing. It is not surprising then, that they "actively resist a growing pressure not to speak what they know from experience [and from] the evidence of their senses" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 90). In dialogue, the interviewers observe the depth and accuracy of the girls' critique of adults' verbal and actual behaviors. They also observe the struggle with the choices between self-integrity and social complicity, between popularity (female social power), and resistance. Their "interviews suggest girls are conscious and aware of this relational impasse, this move toward false or idealized relationships" (p. 97).

This time in girls' lives when the real and ideal divide seems critical. The move to the ideal leaves girls in danger of losing their relational reality, a reality that is crucial for them to hold onto, since once girls lose their ability to name relational violations they become, in new ways, vulnerable to abuse—both psychological and physical. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 106)

Brown and Gilligan wonder whether they are "witnessing the beginning of psychological splits and relational struggles well documented in the psychology of women (1992, p. 106). Three girls, Noura, Judy, and Victoria, illustrate this self-silencing, "three different stories of girls' struggle for voice in the face of pressure to not know and not speak" (p. 108).

The source of this new fear is the "perfect girl." In white middle-class America she is the girl who has no bad thoughts or feelings, the kind of person everyone wants to be with, the girl who, in her perfection is worthy of praise and attention, worthy of inclusion and love. . . . "so good at math" . . . draws perfectly . . . speaks quietly, calmly, who is always nice and kind, never mean or bossy. (Brown & Gilligan, p. 59)

At the inception of this mind/feelings split, the interviewers note the confusion between clarity of thought and speech about what one has observed and knows at the deep level, and of how one should modulate one's voice tone, vocabulary, and behavior, to conform to the social role of the perfect girl. This time is the "impasse between what she feels and what others say" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 131), causing psychological confusion. Teachers and parents take the responsibility for shaping her into a secondary gender role; she observes and experiences male economic and status power (violating and, at times, violent). As described, women, and especially mothers, are given the overt task and role.

Physical changes add the third dimension to the power struggle for personal autonomy. Twelve and 13-year-old girls' bodies become objects of scrutiny, adding to their psychological confusion as they confront the cultural, political, and moral feminine ideal. Her body now under scrutiny, the girl merging into adolescence becomes cautious in relationships as she accommodates culture's expectations. The authors note that a concern for social inclusion causes a conflict between personal knowledge and sociocultural expectancies which impinge on the degree of genuineness in relationships "as they take in images of women's bodies and women's psyches that do not have room for their experience" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 184). Their findings indicate how a girl's degree of concern about her image, of being labelled "selfish," and of caution in relationships and conversational interaction reveals the lessening of her authentic inner voice, and the degree of sociocultural control over her internal dialogue with that Self. For Brown and Gilligan, this watershed occurs between the ages of 12 and 14 years, an indicator being the ease or dis-ease with which she expresses her thoughts and feelings; "a static, controlled relational language [indicates a] movement into the sea of Western culture and a profound psychological loss" (p. 180). For these authors, this resistance takes three forms, which three

girls, Anna, "the political resister;" Neeti, "the perfect girl;" and Liza, "the cover girl," illustrate.

Anna is a scholarship winner from an impoverished European-American working-class background. It is girls like her, the authors comment, "who, because of color or class, live in the margins, who are so clearly at odds with the dominant models of female beauty and perfection as to reveal the cultural hand behind the standards" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 226). Anna, journeying along the pathway from girlhood to mid-adolescence, at times experiencing personal disquiet, nevertheless exits into late adulthood maintaining her own voice. She initially attempts to deny her feelings, to remain silent and withhold what she observes and knows, to compromise her personality and conform to the good girl/good woman ideal. Then, during her final junior high-school year, at 14, Anna "becomes outspoken—a political resister" (p. 184) intellectually discerning and affectively aware. Anna maintains her Self, clear (and at times loud) of voice, discerning and perceptive of both "I" and the omnipresent cultural "eye" (p. 167). Within her home, while her unemployed father is given to violent rages, Anna's relationship with her mother remains strong, a mother whose personality and appearance does not "fit conventional images of good women" (p. 225). These authors portray a psychologically functional mother/daughter relationship of conflict and resolution, sharing of confidences, and of all ranges of emotion.

Neeti, an Indian-born upper-middle-class girl, reveals her family obliquely as she models that perfect girl. "Unable to speak what she feels and thinks," (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 39) she is expected to behave with courtesy towards her mother's and sisters' friends. Neeti, carefully "watches and listens in on the relational world" (p. 196). Correspondingly, as she internalizes the perfect-girl image, Neeti gradually lessens her authentic, self-aware voice, her uniqueness sublimated as she identifies with others' voices, "someone else's standards of perfection" (p. 197). Withholding her genuine feelings and thoughts, speaking only what is appropriate, she is well-liked, successful, and "nice," but at 14 years of age outward appearances are deceiving; Neeti has become "involved in relationships that are not

psychological connections" (p. 202). The researchers notice Neeti's reticence in "voicing anything but the nice and kind self she shows the world" (p. 203), and become concerned for her future psychological health. Required to write an essay describing herself, Neeti realizes she cannot. She remains stuck. Then, during the researchers' group retreat towards the end of the project, she shares one researcher's presentation paper with her mother, a decision that leads to her mother becoming actively involved by speaking with Brown, and "Neeti and her mother to speak more openly with one another, so that Neeti [is] less alone and less hidden" (p. 232).

The third typecast, Liza, an upper-middle-class girl, models her parents' attitudes and social profile. She internalizes "discretion [as] another name for disconnection" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 172). Unlike Anna and Neeta, 12-year-old Liza struggles to listen to herself. "Mingled with this voice of emerging independence and separation is a voice of feminine silence and acceptance—a soft voice that knows when to be sensitive and when not to 'disrupt,' how to be 'discreet,' and compromising" (p. 207). Through her 13th year she shuns female company and adopts and adapts herself to the physical image of the "cover girl." Intent, aware, and overly concerned by others' gazes, particularly a male's, she abuses her own body to the point of anorexia. By 14 years of age, Liza "no longer knows what she knows or can name what is happening in her relationships—her boyfriend's emotional abuse; her own abuse of her body" (p. 215). At 16 years of age, Liza models an internalised all-American perfection of womanhood (poised, quietly spoken, perfectly-groomed anorexic body). At the retreat with Neeti and Anna, she asks *the* question. Liza, removed from the "I" of Self, lost and absorbed into the "eye" of her culture, raises a probing, perverse, and provocative query, a poignantly sad commentary on a textualized segment of contemporary American culture, and innocently calls all cultures to the witness stand:

I would just like to know from you as psychologists or people with that kind of degree, is there such a thing as a person who is not necessarily perfect but who has everything together all the time? Not appears to but just does mentally, psychologically? Is there such a person? Is that possible? (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 230)

The researchers and female teachers involved report experiencing a gradual discomfort and disquiet as they recognize their own adolescent experiences in these girls' voices from time to time. Each gradually realizes how "adolescence is a time of disconnection, sometimes of dissociation or repression in women's lives, so that women often do not remember—tend to forget or cover over—what as girls they have experienced and known" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 4). One sees how, intentionally or unintentionally, across the generations, women may collude in the ongoing devaluation of their own sexuality and gender.

The American Working Class Feminine Gender

In a complementary text, *Between Voice and Silence*, written by Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1995), 26 young adolescent 13- through 15-year-old girls labelled "at risk" by their public schools were interviewed annually over a period of 3 years. The experiences of these girls from working-class and poor backgrounds within a racially and ethnically diverse area of America also challenge our values. The institutional intention remains the same: Within these social spaces, despite individual talents and future aspirations, these young adolescent girls' voices will also be manipulated, lessening their developmental potential (Belenky et al., 1986; c.f. Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The intended outcome is colored by the girls' sociopolitical citizenship-birth statuses, and underpinned by their socioeconomic family realities. While these authors are personally aware of the girls' expressiveness and verbal capabilities, they also record the truth behind repetitive comments that "nobody listens, nobody cares, nobody asks what they are feeling and thinking" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 1). Observing a girl's lived experiences within this prejudice against her race, class, and economic status, their research "widen[s] into a political inquiry: can women act in concert to end a racist and sexist society?" (1995, p. 7)

Like their private-school educated counterparts, these girls' psychological strengths and resiliencies are challenged during their early adolescent years. The innate self-confidence of this eighth-grade public-school girl also lessens. Like Brown and Gilligan's (1992) girls, during Grade 9, "the phrase 'I don't know,' can be tied to her choice not to speak, but it also

reflects some loss of knowledge of her need and desire for connection with others" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 45). Her affective voice sublimated, this breach of trust indicates a distancing, and an emotional withdrawal. The extent of this social violation is revealed to the degree this young adolescent girl "develop(s) a practice of keeping her thoughts, feelings, and experiences out of relationships" (p. 63). Yet, as these researchers notice and record, a display of behavioral defiance or loudly protesting "the conventional dictates of femininity by claiming power of her own" (p. 47) is doomed to failure. These researchers saw

few safety nets available to these girls when they made mistakes, took wrong turns, acted on impulses that turned out to be misguided or foolish or simply unlucky, or sank into a kind of depressive lethargy and withdrew from the world. It was here that the combined effects of race, ethnicity, and class were so powerful. (1995, p. 4)

As these authors report, grades suffer, relationships disappear, independence becomes Relationships, and the young adolescent drops out, pregnant and disillusioned.

The authors record how not only affective clarity, but also mind and body clarity is to be institutionally modified (c.f. Brown & Gilligan, 1992). The medium is language use: the method, how the girls are engaged in conversation and to what degree they are heard or silenced, when, and why. However, these public-school girls do not fear that perfect girl, that idealized image of femininity. These girls' concerns are their reputations, the mode of control being "rumors and gossip, especially around real or presumed sexual activity" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 118). Theirs is a model to avoid rather than to attain, towards the negative end of society's desirable feminine behavior scale. The social-status power these girls are to experience as adults will be limited and limiting, and is to centre on their internalising an external locus of control (Belenky et al., 1986).

For these girls, too, the interviews and analyses reveal isolation and disconnection away from the Self as the covert socializing curriculum component. But this demand for status quo conformity means a loss of creativity and authenticity. Particularly vulnerable, therefore, are the expressive, highly creative, original, and intense personalities. "For educators to

support Mary's writing—or Oliva's poetry, or any of the other girls' nascent or flourishing creativity and connection to their feelings—requires the awareness that an intense vulnerability often accompanies the desire for self-expression" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 198). Instead, as described, what is required of these girls is a loss of vitality, vivacity, and creative direction. The choice, according to these authors' findings, becomes a "no win." Compromising her Self to accommodate her socialized lessened role "can mean fraudulence and self-betrayal" (p. 146), while to insist upon speaking what she feels, observes, and knows may well result in peer, family, and social rejection. Distanced, alone and lonely, these formerly vivacious girls become "psychologically lost in a crowd" (p. 152).

If it is girls' experience that "no one ever listens," that "nobody cares" about what they say and do, that they are "never talking to one person," the potential for healthy social, emotional, and intellectual development is severely compromised. What develops instead is an enveloping sense of isolation and powerlessness, a loss of faith that others will come through for them. (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 154)

Sadly, an eighth-grade girl's anticipated relationship becomes a dispiritedness in Grade 10. What this research reveals is not only the crucial role of relationships between women and girls that enhances or inhibits a girl's future potential, especially the creatively talented, but also the connection between female relationship (i.e., trust and friendship) and the personal power of accomplishment and contribution that enables women irrespective of age. The girls say what they need. As they attempt to defy the social odds and surpass their present realities, they need women's support, encouragement and "strategies for dealing with adversity in the world" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 174). But these researchers and teachers are well aware of the intentional shift away from "the inclusion of the voices of girls in the development of programs intended for their benefit" (p. 191). Instead, they "are talked about, and talked at, but rarely . . . spoken to or listened to" (p. 191). These girls unknowingly are requesting that the covert curriculum of silencing their voices be overruled, for female and male teachers a highly political act because it would change the social-power structure. The adults involved in this study, aware of the constructed obstacles, of the lack of "funds, connections, information, and preparation that are required to adequately plan for their future" (p. 189), record the obstructions to these girls' career aspirations and sense of

wellbeing.

Yet in interviews, these young adolescent girls know, and describe, personal relationship power—that shared sense of personal accomplishment in an area of interest. They wish to pursue that interest, to move beyond their present reality; to not marry before establishing a career. Despite their intellectually, culturally, and economically impoverished lifeworlds, the girls believe that “hard work and equal opportunity” (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 175) will enable them to enter the middle-class lifestyle. Entering high school, the girls’ focus and energy levels belie the stereotypical attitude that they lack motivation, deferred gratification, are low achievers, anticipate social assistance, or are prone to negative peer pressures (p. 176). Rather, according to this data, it is the lack of high school teachers’ interest in the young adolescents as personalities, the tendency to use their professional authority—and as the girls’ report, to ignore a student’s perspective—that proves disabling. By the 10th grade, the girls recognize the difficulties, improbabilities, or impossibilities of attaining their goal.

Instead, “obstacles to relationships among women and between women and girls are built into institutions, including schools” (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 163), revealing the gender roles within the curriculum. As this text outlines, by separating women from girls, the segregation of the sexes within the sexes, a female’s voice of relationship power is sabotaged, silenced, disrespected, and devalued. The teachers speak of being heavily scheduled, frequently moved, of having little job security. Sharing classroom insights or taking time to develop an interest in the students’ overall progress is difficult. And, as the women researchers learn, intentionally breaking through the silencing and silences between the young adolescent girl and the adult woman is not without risk. These findings reveal the consequences. For a young adolescent girl, if “the pendulum of voice or silence swings too far in either direction each poses a risk” (1995, p. 67). But the pendulum also applies to the women educators and psychologists. Becoming personally engaged and involved also risks the “rumors and the gossip of their peers” (p. 172). Why?

That risk is the risk of change. To listen to girls whose voices are ordinarily met with

silence in the larger world is to invite disruption, disturbance, or dissolution of the status quo. To support the strengths, intelligence, resilience, and knowledge of girls whose culture or class is marginalized by society is to support political, social, educational, and economic change. (Taylor et al., 1995, pp. 202-203)

These adult researchers may hold professional power and social status, yet the conversations, interviews, and data analysis also remind them of their adolescent gender socialization and subsequent vulnerabilities. As Gilligan comments: "Relationships with girls become political, raising questions for women to ask the girls and themselves" (p. 140).

Women have sublimated their experiences under layers of survival that classifies a female's socialization (Belenky et al., 1986; Miller, 1987). The "obstacles to relationship" between women and girls, whether professional, across class, or within a girl's environment itself "may be impeded by women's experience of loss in their own adolescence and of the pain of feeling helpless and powerless in the face of that loss" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 155). Straightforwardness in speaking, the authenticity of vulnerability, the honesty of intensity, the anticipation of succeeding in the adult world that the eighth grade girls display, and is subdued by the tenth grade, revive, as these researchers' share, "not only remembrances of pain in adolescence but also women's reconnection with similar struggles they face as adults" (p. 156). These girls raise issues the women researchers and teachers have buried. Reconnecting with the girls reawakens their own adolescent losses, what strategies they use to protect themselves from vulnerability, and to what degree each woman is prepared to engage in relationship with female students and colleagues. From the girls' conversations, women who "acted as advocates, served to validate the girls and their experience, and fostered the girls' sense of self-respect and confidence. . . . a place for genuine connection and a safe escort into the adult world" (p. 119). Of the girls interviewed, those who were supported and encouraged by a mother, aunt, or adult friend graduated. Without an adult female's support and interest in her concerns, the young adolescent girl struggled in turn with confusion, defiance, isolation, and loneliness, then dropped out.

Gilligan spoke for the lives of many females from adolescence forward: "To speak and not

be heard is so devastating. And it takes so much energy to work out whether you're crazy, whether it's just your issue, whether you're making trouble" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 156). Her comment in light of women entering middle adulthood demands reflection. Within segments of the Western culture, if the young woman entering her productive years is so constructed, how is the older woman to be constructed as she exits those years? Despite her age and lifeworld experiences, will she confront similar challenges to that of the adolescent girl?

The Australian Feminine Gender

In a well-researched text, *The Modern Girl: Girlhood and Growing Up*, Johnson, an Australian professor of communications, asks the question, "What does it mean for women to grow up?" (1993, p. v). How is a woman's personality defined and specifically gendered? This text is insightful as Johnson concentrates on the "sexing" of the "modern girl" within Australia when the Australian and New Zealand women interviewed for this study entered and exited their teenage years. An overview of her bibliography lists "Books, manuscripts, and articles [which incorporate British, Western European, American, and Australian scholastic perspectives]; Films [American, Australian]; Commissions of inquiry, parliamentary papers and archival sources cited [Australia; London, England]; Newspapers and magazines [Australian]; and Pamphlets cited, [Australian]" (pp. 174-181). Her research therefore extends beyond Australian publications to include the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences upon Australian culture and its people. In the second of two paragraphs prior to her above listings, Johnson writes:

Listed below are all primary sources, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, films and contemporary publications specifically referred to in this book. In addition, I have listed those books, articles and unpublished material that I have drawn on in the argument of this book. I have not attempted to separate out this latter material from the publications of the 1950s and 1960s because the distinction is not always clear. (Johnson, 1993, p. 174)

Concentrating specifically on the 1950s and early 1960s, when the teen years and teenagers were discovered, Johnson focuses on the Australian adolescent female's sociocultural

indoctrination, construction, and positioning. Johnson's "book is an account of some of those historical factors and conditions through which Australian women have formulated the question, what does it mean to grow up" (1993, p. vi)? In addition to academic texts and articles on educational policy, and the political and economic intentions for teenagers of the 1950s, Johnson researched the media image-makers (women's magazines, daily newspapers, films) to see how the Australian adolescent female was socioeconomically and sociopolitically positioned via educational policies, and socioculturally via the image-makers towards her future role and social spaces. Both the young adolescent females and their families received extensive advice from the experts. While Johnson did not interview women who were then teenagers, nevertheless her text comprehensively profiles a sociohistorical and sociocultural background towards this study. As Commonwealth citizens, there likely are parallels with New Zealand and Canada, given the political, economic, and cultural British, European, and American influences. While Johnson is not "claiming to discover what young women actually thought and did in this period" (p. 4), the 10 women of my study in reviewing segments of their life histories will offer insights.

According to Johnson, how a young adolescent female was to conduct herself in her social spaces received extensive coverage. Within the educational institutions, as an adolescent, she was also taught that she had "both the opportunity and obligation to make a self and a life for [herself]" (Johnson, 1993, p. 77). For a larger percentage of the girls though, the reality involved overcoming what Johnson terms "structural impediments, both in terms of social background and type of education offered, preventing a great many from feeling at home with the education system's claim to provide the tools and opportunity to undertake this making of a self" (p. 77). Why was this?

Noted Johnson (1993), the 1950s saw the inception of adolescence and youth as a "species" due to a loss of values after World War II—British youth became "a focus for anxieties," and American adolescents "the focus of analyses" (p. 39). Sociologists and psychologists explored the problem of how to construct the modern "autonomous" and "self-determining"

male, while defining the female's role as primarily biological, "as somehow outside or as the 'Other' of modernity" (p. 44). Within Australia, notes Johnson, Havighurst, an American developmental psychologist, wielded considerable influence. Certainly, the Australian educational system appears to have undergone a subtle shift away from the English influence and towards the American with this construction of the adolescent, which "in USA became a major industry" (p. 39). She notes the proliferation of research articles in the social sciences on the creating of a special category for this new phenomenon, the adolescent.

In particular, the science of developmental psychology, which became increasingly professionalized in the 1950s, would seek to monitor the lives of all young people and to assist them in undertaking the tasks, as it understood and interpreted them, of the modern individual. (Johnson, 1993, p. 45)

Now, as well as the churches and teachers' influences, developmental psychologists and education experts, together with the media, assisted and advised the family network as well as the adolescent. Intentionally, as Johnson's research shows, both the adolescent boy and the adolescent girl were institutionally programmed and imprinted towards a culturally appropriate future respective adult role and position within the community. Havighurst recommended that the male and female roles be shaped from birth (Johnson, 1993, p. 61). And an Australian academic, Connell's (1963) publication and recommendations following extensive interviews of Sydney adolescents through 1950 saw the problem as Australian youth lacking "a coherent Australian identity" (Johnson, 1993, p. 55; c.f. Erikson, 1968). Furthermore, Johnson reports, the teachers were expected to produce the future adult—intellectually capable, emotionally mature, socially skilled, and verbally articulate. The adolescent, though, was to be "moulded" into believing that he/she was choosing his/her direction and making the decisions, "through a set of trainings and material arrangements, to think, act and desire according to a particular set of rules or norms which defined how the self-actualizing individual should operate" (Havighurst, cited in Johnson, pp. 55-62). How was the Australian young adolescent girl's education and future social role envisioned and educationally constructed? Johnson sketches the construction of that young woman.

Experiencing high school education: the "sexing" of the Australian "modern girl." The Australian girl was also to identify herself according to the cultural "eye," and the male gaze (c.f. Brown & Gilligan, 1992). As Johnson (1993) elaborates, an adolescent girl's self-determination, autonomy, and choices were socially confined and defined; her choice remained *either* a career *or* marriage. Furthermore, her choices were to be based upon whether she intended to marry, in which case she would become the economically dependent wife. Moreover, while high school attendance to age 14 was now compulsory for both males and females, nevertheless, as Johnson portrays, determining the curriculum to maintain a class structure of elite and worker would remain. In both the public and private schools, the distinction between an academic, quality education and a functional substitute would be determined by streaming the academic and the non-academic students.

"Particularly in the early 1950s, the new clientele for an extended schooling was defined in terms of *an assumed lack of capacity for and interest in* [italics added] the traditional work of the secondary school" (Johnson, 1993, p. 70). The girls deemed non-academically inclined were streamed and timetabled into a commercial program, with "art and crafts, dressmaking, domestic science, and pre-nursing courses" possible options (p. 71). The students, their future opportunities and direction at stake, were not necessarily consulted. Until marriage, their pre-determined female work roles would be "clerical work, dressmaking and nursing," assumed by the experts and community, reinforced by the media, and to be absorbed by the 1950s girls as their chosen identity (p. 70). Through the 1950s the majority of high school girls left high school shortly after turning 14, while girls eligible to enter a university in 1960 still only numbered "16 out of every 1000" (p. 77). It was not until the end of the 1950s when the ideology of molding the student shifted to "becoming self-governing" that consideration was given a student's innate abilities and interests, too late for the teenager of the earlier 1950s (p. 73). This text clearly shows the demarcation line between the academic route of the private colleges (and several public all-girl city high schools), and by what methods the co-educational state high schools, mandated by the experts, overlooked an individual's potential by streaming and timetabling certain youth into

an intellectually lessened social self. There were the few who experienced their schooling differently, girls whom a teacher(s) encouraged and who internalized the challenge, expectation, and a sense of identity in achievement, accomplishment, and an anticipation of future success (p. 78).

The role of the media. Extensive media coverage likewise encouraged the young modern female to view marriage as her goal by "produc[ing] her body in feminine form" (Johnson, 1993, p. 79), her educational opportunities and her future economic potential constructed and limited accordingly. Molded and shaped by the developmental norms psychologists and the social-policy makers outlined and determined, as Johnson clarifies, the female's choosing Self was formulated towards her biological function, primarily economically male-dependent. Furthermore, she elaborates, groomed towards a marketable marriage product, she was to be ever conscious and aware of observing others, particularly of the male gaze. A young-adolescent female's grooming, poise, emotions, and intellect came under scrutiny, the intention being she would internalize that "eye" and constantly critique and criticize herself (p. 125). Trained "to please, to put others at their ease, and to pose no challenge, . . . always they were to be dissatisfied with how they looked, uncertain whether they were making themselves in the right image" (pp. 125-126), while ostensibly believing they were choosing. Trained into a deferential role, trained for the role of wife and mother, "surrounded by competing interests of parents, teachers and friends, they had to learn to take responsibility for themselves and to do so in the correct manner" (Johnson, 1993, p. 148).

Rather than the American "perfect girl," the Australian adolescent female of this era was a "modern girl." If she played by the social rules, she would become a "loved individual"—married, with children (Johnson, 1993, p. 150). She was a "gendered formulation of the cultural ideal of the self-determining individual" (p. 67), her destiny socioculturally molded and shaped to fit. What effect this construction of her self had on a number of women's decisions or choices made during their young adult and mid-adult years and through their middle-adult passage, is the *raison d'être* of my study.

Two articles in Australia's then most popular magazine for the female masses, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, dated November 4, 1959, add emphasis to Johnson's findings. The edition of *Teenagers' Weekly*, a supplement introduced in this same magazine to assist in constructing the young-adolescent female's image and presentation, included an interview with key parent and teacher committee members from 12 religious-oriented private girls' colleges. This committee had written a South Australian teenager's code. When the girl's code was almost in place, representatives from a number of same-denomination private boys' colleges accepted an invitation to join them. One of the headmasters, described as "an Englishman" (Rowland, 1959, p. 3), added the following, which became the title of the one-page article.

They'd revive chivalry: Boys should be encouraged from the youngest age to behave at all times in a chivalrous manner towards their partner, to honor and respect women, and take the responsibility of looking after them. Girls should be brought up to expect such behaviour. (Teenagers' Weekly: The Australian Women's Weekly Supplement, 1959, November 4, p. 3)

The adolescent females were advised to set a high moral standard, cautioned specifically about the dangers of theatres, drive-ins, the abuse of social freedom, and the importance of courtesy. A direct "No" was given "pre-marital experience" (Rowland, 1959, p. 3). Parental involvement was advised at every function, and it was important that *both* parents gave "parental control, guidance, and affection."

The November 18, 1959, issue of *Teenagers' Weekly* included a discussion and letters from readers on "the right age to marry" (p. 3), on "making and keeping friends" (pp. 4-5), and on "trousseaus" (pp. 8-9). Menninger, an American psychologist, directed his article on friendship towards the young adolescent female, including how she was to conduct herself as her husband's friend. Paragraphs addressed key indicators of friendship: sincerity, honesty, keeping one's word, standing up for one's own opinion and ideas, assisting a friend in trouble, loyalty and kindness (not talking behind another person's back), the capacity to love (genuine affection, sympathy and understanding), together with what he considered the poor qualities of "hostility, selfishness, passivity, and exhibitionism" (1959, p. 5). As one

can see, a standard of near perfection was expected of this Australian adolescent female.

Environmental Impact: Young Adult Identity—Social Role and Self in Relationship

The Australian 1950s+ Woman

The 1959, November 18, issue of *The Teenagers' Weekly Supplement* containing Menninger's article, focused on courtship, friendship, and trousseaus. In the parent magazine, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Holmes, a female journalist, wrote in her article "Why a woman can't talk to her husband," that a male's primary reason for marriage was sex, his way of communicating. Once married, she wrote, conversation becomes extremely difficult as mundane duties interfere, and people grow apart. He had likely spent his day in stimulating company and conversation with both males and females; that was not a wife's function. He was not interested in any thought-provoking discussion with her, and was wary of intimacy; perhaps "nature never intended the sexes to talk" (Holmes, 1959, p. 28). Moreover, his reaction likely would be one of "outright impatience or polite indifference" (p. 29).

Such ideas on art, music, love, hope and human destiny not only look funny on the woman who sorts your socks, they pose vague undertones of that "divine discontent" which Schöpenhauer says shapes progress, but which can also play havoc in the home. Furthermore, they demand a degree of intimacy that not everyone is willing to yield— an intimacy of the spirit that goes beyond the intimacy of sex itself. (Holmes, 1959, p. 29)

"Instinctively defensive of his own masculinity," although the Australian husband had a forbearance towards women in the public sector, he intended to maintain his traditional role as the breadwinner (Holmes, 1959, p. 29). A husband preferred his wife to know her place, to be "decorative but dumb, at least in their private life together" (1959, p. 29). Furthermore, Holmes continued, in talking with psychologists, they had confirmed that "that is how many a man operates" (p. 29). Holmes then offered advice: Be "sensible, [and] make the best of it. . . and when you fail, pick up the phone and call a friend" (p. 29). When considering the ages in 1959 of the 10 women under study, within this one magazine, two psychologists gave

contradictory messages, one, written for the adolescent, the other, her mother.

Horne (1964), an Australian journalist and editor, writing 253 pages on *The Lucky Country: Australia in the Sixties*, devoted 3 pages to the Australian woman. Commenting on her workplace role, Horne saw no difference when compared with other industrialized societies, although the smaller number of professional women lessened their "solidarity," professional opportunities, and "public acceptance" (p. 84). It is *his* description of that "modern girl's" internalization of her self in her wife and/or mother role that is revealing. Comparing her with the American housewife, Horne noted the Australian woman tended to make the decisions; that the Australian homes were more "mother-dominated than American homes" (p. 86). However, what Horne had observed about this domination, the place and space of the Australian husband and/or father was that while "men and women go their own ways, the men get the best of the bargain because they have more ways to go" (1964, p. 85). When not working, or "playing with his mates," at home he likely was the "odd jobs man, the chauffeur and the gardener" (p. 86). She, meanwhile, "set(s) herself high standards of housewifemanship and family care and [made] a temple of her home . . . and in home entertainment and cooking [gave] life much of its meaning" (p. 86). But, wrote Horne, perhaps one of the most distinctive differences between the Australian and the American woman was her involvement in her husband's career advancement. Noted Horne,

[The Australian woman] is not usually concerned with her husband's career; she does not use her 'home' to help him in his job, but to build a world in which she believes. She has created a much more subtle world than the man's world, not so dependent on money, a world of multiple difference. (Horne, 1964, p. 86)

The American 1950s+ Woman

In 1955, the Smith College graduating students listened to a presidential candidate, Adlai Stevenson's, advice on their duties as newly responsible, educated citizens of the United States (Martin, 1985). In "an era in which a rose was given to every Radcliffe College senior engaged by graduation day to be married" (p. 171), her highest calling was to assume the traditional role of wife and mother. Sitting "in the living room with a baby on your lap, or

in the kitchen with a can opener in your hands,"

is important work worthy of you, whoever you are, or your education, whatever it is—even Smith College because we will defeat totalitarian, authoritarian ideas only by better ideas; we will frustrate the evils of vocational specialization only by the virtues of intellectual generalization. Since Western rationalism and Eastern spiritualism met in Athens and that mighty creative fire broke out, collectivism in various forms has collided with individualism time and again. This twentieth-century collision, this "crisis" we are forever talking about, will be won at last not on the battlefield but in the head and heart. (Adlai Stevenson, cited in Martin, 1985, p. 172)

He reassured his graduating audience that, while at times the routine would be dull, nevertheless, her role would be much more impactful than what high-profile personages achieve (p. 173). Here, too, was the young adult role that the 10 women in my study were to model.

Then Friedan's (1963) publication of *The Feminine Mystique* "pulled the trigger on [America's] history" (Tofler, 1997, jacket cover). Friedan, an American and Smith College graduate, acted as the catalyst for the American housewives who were recognizing the emptiness of their American suburban housewife's Dream—that problem of busied boredom. "American women [were being] kept from growing to their full human capacities," which was affecting not only their physical and mental health but that of their country (Friedan, 1963, p. 364). Reviewing American magazines and using one *McCall's* 1960s magazine (the magazine then most widely read by American women), she found, as with most women's magazines, that male editors and male writers within 10 years had displaced the women editors and writers of "the spirited career girl" and of thought-provoking articles. The male experts by the end of the 1940s were writing what *they* said women wanted to read (1963). To fulfil her femininity role,

in the second half of the twentieth century in America, women's world was confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of man, the bearing of babies, and the physical care and serving of husband, children, and home. And this was no anomaly of a single issue of a single women's magazine. (Friedan, 1963/1997, p. 36)

Johnson (1993) highlighted from an Australian perspective how the experts had interpreted

and reinforced autonomy and self-determination differently for their 1950s male and female youth. "Modernity was clearly linked to masculinity," he was to "master nature" and "control the universe" (p. 50). She, on the other hand, was being groomed similarly to the American woman as the consumer of male productivity while concentrating on her reproductive duties (Johnson, 1993). Johnson's findings perhaps indicate the cause behind the global effectiveness and influence of Friedan's text (and others) upon the Western world. Friedan (1963) recommended social and political activism, a sex-role and equality revolution, education, economic independence, a voice in decision-making, and decisions over one's reproductivity. Was Friedan advocating social anarchy or social responsibility?

Erikson: Sociocultural and Individual Anomie

Erikson, a Euro-American practising psychoanalyst, writer and academic, was familiar with sociocultural symptoms of "disorder, dysfunction, disintegration, [and] anomie" (1964, p. 139) resulting from an individual's developmental aspirations being sabotaged by one's own initially perceived limitations or by others' wilful prohibitions and blocks. Commenting that, if left alone, an individual seems to overcome these growth obstacles relatively easily, Erikson also believed that long-range dysfunction or anomie highlighted the "defects in the 'fiber' of generations and institutions" (pp. 139-140). Why do these "defects" remain systemic? How is a male's or a female's essence of Self trivialised?

Constructing the Contemporary Culture

During the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution threw Europe and England into economic and social chaos. In 1897, Durkheim published his influential theory of social realism. The end of WWII (1945) left the Western world in social chaos and economic disarray. Within the United States, technological advances, mass production, the advent of corporations, and its nuclear families, necessitated social service infrastructures (e.g., sociologists, psychologists, mass education). A 1951 translation of *Le Suicide* leaves little doubt as to Durkheim's influence on North America. Durkheim's views on conjugal anomie vis-à-vis

women's cultural and economic position has significance for this present study, as does the counter influence of Guyau's view of anomie preferred by some psychology and sociology theorists.

The Socioeconomic Spaces and Two Interpretations of Anomie

These two theorists towards the end of the nineteenth century basically held opposing viewpoints. Guyau was a 19th century French-Catholic philosopher, sociologist, and Greek scholar; Durkheim was a sociologist of French-Jewish rabbinical background.

For this study, one needs to be aware of the differences between Guyau's and Durkheim's perspectives on anomie. An individual's and collective group's psychological wellbeing is affected. Contrary to Erikson and Guyau, "Durkheim misjudged the historical role of anomie by treating it as a pathological phenomenon of modern societies instead of treating it as their distinguishing feature" (Orrù, 1987, p. 135).

Durkheim held the transcendental viewpoint. His was a collective will, with sociocultural and religious values externally imposed upon the individual to ensure order, as "it is society which, fashioning us in its image, fills us with religious, political and moral beliefs that control our actions" (1897/1951, p. 212). Viewing anomie as an evil, rather than an individual or group's anomie possibly cautioning a society's direction, he advocated the development of corporate solidarity and group control (Orrù, 1987). Durkheim's corporate values were influential in the 1950s and are currently being reinstated globally, now technologically and shareholder driven. As this study involves women now in their middle years who were adolescents or young adults then, his philosophy needs further elaboration.

Durkheim's ideal society. His society, controlled by a collective, corporate human hand, imposes male solidarity (1897/1951). Moreover, this "occupational group or corporation . . . form a collect personality, jealous, even excessively so, of its autonomy and of its authority over its members" morally, socially, and economically (p. 378). And, Durkheim

continues, corporately or collectively organized, religion with its trusted tradition of symbols and moral power assists. A government's role then becomes simply that of a figurehead, supposedly guarding against any monopoly of corporate power.

Furthermore, once the individual worker has identified with the corporate mandate and internalised his tasks as his personally goal-oriented behavior, then his personality and morality can be molded according to the corporate ethic. Not unlike the pyramid of the feudal system, the corporation imposes order by "standing above its own members . . . forcing the strongest to use their strength with moderation, to prevent the weakest from endlessly multiplying their protests, by recalling both to the sense of their reciprocal duties and the general interest" (Durkheim, 1897/1951, p. 382). An individual surrenders his individuality to a group individualism, and to assist this process Durkheim utilises the power of language (1897/1951, p. 387). The authority figures and group regulation of (and by) all sociocultural institutions are utilised to eliminate anomie. However, there is the woman problem, or the problem of male conjugal anomie, as she is outside of the sphere of equivalent corporate influence and control.

Durkheim's role for women. Durkheim recommends furthering gender inequality by depriving the female of equal access to education and by eradicating divorce. Educationally, socially, and economically restricted, she enhances a male's social, economic, and moral wellbeing, simply because "her mental life is less developed" (1897/1951, p. 272). To assist this social devaluation, Durkheim elaborates, she will engage in society's lesser-valued aesthetic pursuits under the impression she has made a choice, having been structured away from male-dominated knowledge and work areas in which he becomes more and more absorbed and socially controlled (p. 379).

Woman would not be officially excluded from certain functions and relegated to others. She could choose more freely, but as her choice would be determined by her aptitudes, it would generally bear on the same sort of occupations. It would be perceptibly uniform, though not obligatory. (Durkheim, 1897/1951, p. 384)

Equal education was unnecessary, Durkheim rationalized, as women are "traditionalist by nature, govern their conduct by fixed beliefs and have no great intellectual needs" (p. 166). Not only is the female devalued intellectually, socially, and morally, but she will take a complementary role as bound by her biology, her "nature" and "aptitudes."

To counteract the male being cut adrift from his ethical tradition, Durkheim's corporate philosophy reiterates and reinforces the female's traditional role and social spaces. His intention is that "the female sex will not again become more similar to the male [but once again] more different. But these differences will become of greater social use than in the past" (1897/1951, p. 384).

Durkheim also disagrees with divorce. The marital role will reinforce and reinstate the female's societal role, as Durkheim's male requires social control. "Because he is a more complex social being, he can maintain his equilibrium only by finding more points of support outside himself, and it is because his moral balance depends on a larger number of conditions that it is more easily disturbed" (1897/1951, p. 216). Not naturally monogamous, writes Durkheim, a male needs social constrictions to enable personal stability and to avoid experiencing anomie (p. 272). "Marriage is necessary for the social and moral bonding of a man" as he has more to gain within a marriage, sexually, economically, and mentally than she, she "materially bonded" (p. 252). While a woman requires greater material freedom and less social restrictions, any anomie she experiences must be ignored in favor of the male, who *is* society, and it is society's responsibility to mold humankind towards its collective purpose (p. 211).

Relationships are therefore manipulated so conjugal anomie becomes a woman's problem. He explains: By reinforcing the traditional gender roles to strengthen society, a male may transfer *his* anxiety onto his wife as he attempts in turn to control the environment, even though it may encourage *ennui*, depression, or *anomie* in a woman. For a wife likely benefits from divorce. Nevertheless, Durkheim advocates making divorce more difficult to lessen the

male's tendency towards "conjugal suicide" if left (p. 268). Durkheim reasons a wife's possible suicide within marriage is less of a social loss (1897/1951, p. 384). Any resulting hostility between the couple cannot be remediated, however, as

it originates in fact because the two sexes do not share equally in social life. Man is actively involved in it, while woman does little more than look on from a distance. Consequently man is much more highly socialized than woman. (Durkheim, 1897/1951, p. 385)

One sees the social spaces politicized. Fearing a lessening of personal control and social power, Durkheim's males contest for the social spaces. Knowledge is controlled according to the economic lore of scarce resources (exploitation), continues to be hierarchically distributed (gender roles), and all institutions continue to be linearly constructed (patriarchy).

Guyau's view was immanistic. This means that "the source of moral judgment" resides in the individual rather than being imposed by society (Orrù, 1987, p. 3). According to Orrù, Guyau saw the individual in tension with society, and moral and religious values (or anomie) an interdependent and interactive developmental process between an individual and the group. He believed an individual's well-rounded, critically reflective educational development was the key to a civil and just society, and linked an individual's development (talents, interests, capabilities), to the strengthening of his/her society socioculturally and sociopsychologically (Orrù, 1987).

Guyau's ideal society. Rather than Durkheim's collective power and control, Guyau emphasized the role of individual will and "relative autonomy from the social sphere" (Orrù, 1987, p. 3). And individuals, as part of the cultural social fabric, needed to act responsibly. Guyau believed social ethics consisted of "not merely moral facts . . . but more importantly of moral ideas" (Guyau, cited in Orrù, 1987, p. 99). Moreover, an individual's strength of will denoted a genuine autonomy when it stemmed from an internalised social concern and conscience, for Guyau was convinced that "real 'autonomy' must produce

individuality, not general conformity" (Guyau, cited in Orrù, 1987, p. 166). While Durkheim, then, believed that anomie indicated more social control was necessary, Guyau viewed anomie as an indication that society was in a state of flux and the individual, "as an active agent of such change" was striving to move it forward (Orrù, 1987, p. 115).

Present time. Orrù traces the historical interpretations of anomie from ancient to present time, preferring Guyau's Socratic interpretation over Durkheim's Platonic variation. Orrù's findings reveal that "the literature [as] analyzed offers an alternative to Durkheim by showing that autonomy, not dependency on social rules, characterizes the competent member of society" (1987, p. 145). In the 1950s, both Merton and Srole, as an American sociologist and psychologist respectively, preferred Guyau's interpretation. Social and individual anomie indicated "the dysfunctional relation between institutional means and cultural goals—or between individuals and their social worlds" (p. 146). Srole, an American psychologist of the 1950s, believed individual anomie was a product of social anomie, played out at the individual level, as a "self-to-other alienation" (p. 127).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Erikson (1964) agreed. Anomie is both an indication and the outcome of an external obstruction to an individual's development. So an anomic state indicates a crisis within the individual between potential disintegration and ego strength while struggling for Self identity (Erikson, 1964, p. 139). Could this be an issue for women entering their middle years?

Psychological Perspectives on Adult Development

We began this literature review with a brief overview of Bronfenbrenner's (1995) bioecological model and the role of proximal processes in an individual's psychological development. A micro overview of the historical and present-time role of compulsory education in the constructing of a female's social place and social spaces followed. A one-page synopsis of Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1997) showed why women felt stifled as young married women within their defined political and economic structures. Durkheim's

(1897/1951) social realism theory showed the political and economic macro intention for women and its possible impact within marriage, reinforcing Lerner's (1993) historical review of women's socially constructed silencing. Guyau's alternate perspective on anomie (Orrù, 1987), and the adoption of this perspective by a key psychological theorist, Erikson, concluded the section.

Within the Western culture, if a young woman entering her reproductive years is so constructed, how is an older woman to be constructed as she exits them? Despite her age and lifeworld experiences, will she face similar challenges to those of the adolescent girl? What do key psychological theorists say about adult development and what may be some issues or tasks for women entering their middle adulthood years?

Psychological Theories on Adult Development

Jung: Swiss-European pioneer. Jung published *The Stages of Life* when 55 years old. He divided the life stages into three: childhood, the stage of innocence and reliance on parents; youth, the advent of puberty and psychic consciousness, concentration on personal achievement, social status and family; and adulthood. Jung based his theory of adult development on his personal experiences with mental anxiety (anomie) at the age of 37 that began with an almost unobtrusive but "important change in the human psyche . . . seem[ing] to take its rise in the unconscious" (1976, p. 12). He chose to explore his unconscious psyche, to interpret his inner voice of dreams and fantasy and to explore symbols, myths and world religions. Relinquishing his young-adult success, risking his professional reputation, social identity and stature, Jung's personal determination to follow the process, to rediscover the lesser-developed half of his personality, resulted in his psychospiritual theory of personality. Writing in the 1930s, he commented that men and women by the age of 40 were imbalanced in their emotional and intellectual development. He therefore believed a midlife adult's depression or neurotic behavior indicated a person's unconscious striving towards "psychic wholeness"—a determination to retrieve and incorporate those aspects of the

personality lying relatively dormant (Jung, 1983, p. 332).

Jung's concept is that the aim of one's life, psychologically speaking, should be not to suppress or repress, but to come to know one's other side, and so both to enjoy and to control the whole range of one's capacities; i.e., in the full sense, to "know oneself." (Campbell, in Jung, 1976, p. xviii)

The challenge for each individual entering adulthood (for Jung at approximately 40 years of age) is to discover that life-enhancing path towards a life-lived wisdom that in turn enhances others' cultural contexts (1976, p. 18). This personal journey of inner reflection and introspection means moving beyond the youthful social construction of identity and its rewards of achievement, social status, and recognition. It means developing "other psychic potentialities" (p. 11). To seek "optimal development" of one's personality is a lifelong journey, a deliberated decision, and, a conscious choice to rediscover and incorporate one's unique and individual Self (1983, p. 195). Moreover, the personality and lifestyle changes may not be appreciated. Jung warns of possible relationship conflicts, social isolation, and loneliness. But it also costs not to choose. An attempt to cling to earlier successes brings a "diminution of life," dissatisfaction with one's present life, and therefore as one ages, no vision of a meaningful future—in short, a genuine neurosis (Jung, 1976, p. 14).

Jung observed very few "artists of life," those who continue into the second half of their lives exploring new pathways and developing their individual gifts guided by the discerning voice of the unique Self as artists do (1976, p. 19). He found, for the most part, adults preferring the security of conventional practices, adapting to the group collective voice (1983, p. 200). Aged 80, Jung wrote: "Only the man who is able *consciously* to affirm the power of vocation [one's inner core of the Self] confronting him from within becomes a personality" (1956, p. 155).

Erikson: European-born American psychoanalyst. Erikson's life history, biographical research, and clinical observations of children and adolescents resulted in a life-course perspective and psychosocial epigenetic theory of ego identity. Erikson's childhood and

adolescent research began with his own life experience. His childhood experience of not quite belonging was followed by an adolescent identity crisis. Artistic, yet unsure of his life direction, he wandered Europe until at the age of 25 he met and worked for Anna Freud. These lifeworld experiences evolved into an incredible life and life work. Erikson was gifted with a discerning sensitivity towards the interaction and impact of the social environment upon a person's inner psychological lifeworld and overall development. Equally significant, Erikson's Canadian-born artist wife was not a peripheral figure. He publicly acknowledged her active contribution and participation in his research, writings, and daily professional routine, especially the eight stages of life (1963, p. 8).

Perhaps for this reason, he believed that "the influence of women will not be fully actualized until it reflects without apology the facts of the 'inner space' and the potentialities and needs of the feminine psyche," which does not mean confining her to a reproductive role, nor minimizing her equally competent "intellectual orientation and capacity for work and leadership" (1968, p. 290). Erikson noted the absence of equal respect and recognition for a woman's unique sociocultural perspective within all institutions—a perspective based on her lifeworld experiences (body, mind and affect). He also believed the absence of the perspective was not benefitting society, nor males. Perhaps "such a revolutionary reappraisal may even lead to the insight that jobs now called masculine force men, too, into inhuman adjustment" (p. 290). Moreover, a woman's perspective could possibly temper the "ruthless self-aggrandizement" and attempts to control and dominate the environment and all areas of one's culture and beyond, "with the determination to emphasize such varieties of caring and caretaking as would take responsibility for each individual child born in a planned humanity" (p. 292). Erikson's writings therefore challenge both male and female to move beyond the socially-prescribed institutionalized gender script to enable this sociocultural ideal.

How does an individual negotiate his or her identity throughout life? Erikson published his epigenetic chart of life-stage challenges when 48 years of age (see Appendix B). These

developmental passages are guidelines rather than a prescription, based on two underlying assumptions. The required development of an age-related stage is dependent on the willingness to risk interacting within an ever-widening social radius. At the same time, for "the maintenance of the human world," that society in turn invites, safeguards, and encourages the unfolding personality (1963, p. 273). Each individual must move through the stages, and in moments of conflict avoided or postponed issues from a previous stage will be involved. Entering the final stage of life, one *chooses* one's direction towards ego integrity by acknowledging and resolving these issues; or one chooses despair by denying their existence. It is each individual's personal journey, with wisdom the life gift to strive towards.

What are these shared gifts, Erikson's (1963) interpretation of wisdom? These are: • the gift of trust in humanity which enables hope; • a self-respecting autonomy that enables willpower rather than wilfulness in a life crisis; • the strength of initiative and steadfastness which overrides attempts to shame and guilt; • a sense of competence despite some inevitable failures; • a conscious sense of who one is, one's internalised identity, enabling loyalty to self and community; • an ability to risk intimacy, which enables honor and goodwill; • a recognition that assisting others' developmental potential enables a caring, functional society; and finally, the recognition that one has used and shared one's life experiences and talents generously despite some setbacks, giving one a sense of personal integrity.

Using Erikson's definition of wisdom, his emphasis on individual character development, every individual can attain wisdom irrespective of sex, class, or culture. Rather than the exclusiveness of formal knowledge,

each individual, to become a mature adult, must to a sufficient degree develop all the ego qualities mentioned, so that a wise Indian, a true gentleman, and a mature peasant share and recognize in one another the final stage of integrity (Erikson, 1963, p. 269).

and as a member of one's cultural group:

In order to approach or experience integrity, the individual must know how to be a follower of image bearers in religion and in politics, in the economic order and in technology, in aristocratic living and in the arts and sciences. Ego integrity, therefore, implies an emotional integration which permits participation by followership as well as acceptance of the responsibility of leadership (1963, p. 269).

In his early 60s, Erikson, similarly to Jung, felt that the strength and wisdom necessary as one ages depends upon the traditions one has established and how one uses "accumulated knowledge, mature judgment, and inclusive understanding. . . . By the same token, a civilization can be measured by the meaning which it gives to the full cycle of life" (1968, p. 140).

Sharing his lifeworld wisdom of 80 years, Erikson reviewed the epigenetic theory first written as he entered his middle years. While the average life expectancy had lengthened, the validity of his theory has remained, with one alteration. The dignity of old age can only be maintained when the generative stage of adulthood merges into a "grand-generative function" (1997, p. 63). What Erikson advocates is moving beyond the ideology of the nuclear family, and returning to the ideology of the extended family unit where across and within the generations each individual and generation has respect, purpose, personal identity and meaning (p. 62).

Levinson, an American social psychologist. Using a biographical methodology, Levinson and his team interviewed 40 males (ages 35 to 46) entering midlife during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Building on from Jung's adult personality theory of individuation and Erikson's psychosocial epigenetic theory, Levinson introduced a wholistic and evolutionary perspective to individual adult development across the adult life structure (1980, p. 266). Levinson was 46 years old at the time, and had a vested interest in the study as he wished to understand what he himself had experienced (1978, p. x). He "stud[ied] the sequence by which individuals build, live within, modify, and rebuild the life structure over a span of years," his intention "to more fully capture the flow of the life course" (1986, p. 10).

Levinson's life course "highlights the idea of sequence and temporality, of stability and of change over time" (1980, p. 266). An individual's life course perhaps can be compared to a personal timeline that highlights the significant past influences and events currently situating that individual. An overview of this timeline also enables one to trace the patterns and to note the impact of these events (whether positive or negative) upon the unfolding process and progress of a life across the life cycle. Eras of life define the sequence or seasons of each individual's unique life cycle: preadulthood (0-22 years), early adulthood (17-45 years), middle adulthood (40-65 years), and late adulthood (60+). Each season has "its own biopsychosocial character" that influences the direction an individual takes towards the end of a 5-year transitional period, a time when choices made form the basis of the next season's life structure (1986, p. 5).

Levinson regarded his discovery of a life structure, that "underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" and its evolutionary capacities, as his key contribution to adult development (1986, p. 6). As Levinson explains, the quality of this life structure influences—and in turn is influenced by—how and with whom we interact. An individual's relational focus and priorities are "the primary components of a life structure" (p. 6). While relationships change over time, every individual, Levinson found, has one or two significant relationships that mold the personality. These relationships require reciprocity and "may be a person, a group, institution or culture, or a particular object or place" (p. 6). These receive the focus of attention, occupy the majority of our time, and "are the vehicle by which we live out—or bury—various aspects of ourselves and by which we participate, for better or for worse in the world around us" (p. 6). The quality of these significant relationships, then, not only influence an individual's interior lifeworld (e.g., values, sense of Self), but also influence the degree, focus, and extent of social interaction.

Throughout the eras or seasons of one's life, a developmental evolutionary pattern alternates between a 6 to 7 year period of "structure-building," when an individual "pursues his values and goals," and a structure-changing "transitional period" of 5 years (Levinson, 1980). New

directions taken at the end of a transitional period resulting in a change in the life structure are not short-term decisions but rather the result of earlier events along the life course and of a "relatively extended, complex sequence of change" (p. 275). Levinson identified these change determiners as "marker events" (p. 275). For these reasons, he believed the transitional period of structural change is equally as important as the structure-building stage that follows. Moreover, the cause, effects, and outcome of events and incidents within each season influence the transition period and the direction, choices and decisions taken by the individual as he/she enters the next era (Levinson, 1978, 1980, 1986).

While the choices one makes during the transitional periods are key to the next phase of life, "external conditions influence the specific forms of individual growth and decline and serve to facilitate or hinder the process" (Levinson, 1986, p. 12). Unfortunately, while we may know where to focus our energies, the social structures and individuals within them may thwart the process as "social roles and careers evolve in accord with institutionally defined timetables that vary widely among institutions and cultures" (p. 11). Given these considerations, Levinson saw the process involved during the transitional period of reappraisal, exploration, choices and compromises (and the risks involved) "in urgent need of study" (1980, p. 280). It is this process and the patterns of structure change and of structure-building that is the focus of my study.

Not unlike Jung's and Erikson's observations and analyses, Levinson, too, sees the midlife transitional process as determining one's ultimate middle-life satisfaction. As members of the "dominant generation" guiding and mentoring young adults towards assuming that role in turn, he regards these years as the most productive "unless our lives are hampered in some special way" (1986, p. 6).

One developmental task of this transition is to begin a new step in individuation. To the extent that this occurs, we can become more compassionate, more reflective and judicious, less tyrannized by inner conflicts and external demands, and more genuinely loving of ourselves and others. Without it, our lives become increasingly trivial or stagnant. (p. 5, 1986)

However, Levinson recognises the sociocultural influences of significant institutions, social spaces, and the then current world events. Levinson's structural change, therefore, whether towards growth or stagnation, is a constant across the flow of life. While he omits to mention languaging practices as the medium, the tool used to construct a person-in-world, he nevertheless explains the ongoing dilemma. Neither an individual nor a society's socializing institutions are solely responsible for the developmental pattern of his or her life structure. The two are interactive and interweaving. One needs to consider all influences, "to create a new perspective that combines development and socialization" which requires a multi-disciplinary approach and sensitivity (1986, p. 13). Maslow's self-actualization theory assists.

Maslow: American psychologist. Maslow focused on psychological health rather than psychological dysfunction, and initially explored the concept of self-actualization out of personal interest, not intending to publish (Maslow, 1954, p. 200). On the basis of his initial research study of 3000 college students, Maslow concluded self-actualization is primarily an adult phenomenon. The self-actualizing persons are the more altruistic, authentic, functionally autonomous persons, committed to self-exploration, discerning of their values. Creatively gifted, these individuals strive to develop to their fullest potential, transcend the negative life experiences, and transform the environment around them.

Self-actualization is the coming to full development and actuality of the potentialities of the organism, is more akin to growth and maturation than it is to habit formation or association via reward, that is, it is not acquired from without but is rather an unfolding from within of what is, in a subtle sense, already there. (Maslow, 1954, p. 296)

Some Psychological, Sociological, and Personal Perspectives on Middle Life Issues and Challenges.

In 1955 a symposium was held at the University of Michigan specifically focused on *The Potentialities of Women in Their Middle Years*. Present were "well-known scholars and workers from many fields . . . women scholars from various fields of MSU and the

community act[ing] as discussion leaders" (Gross, 1956, p. vii). In her foreword as editor, Gross, as Department Chair for the College of Home Economics summarized the problem. Early marriage, modern conveniences, and nuclear families with fewer children had resulted in women reaching their middle years with spare time, surplus energy and creativity. This group of women now presented a sociocultural challenge. The women (with their husband's approval) needed to redirect their energies, and their community needed to recognize and utilize their potential. The American psychologist, Havighurst, "whose interest in human developmental stages is well known" (p. viii), delivered the keynote address, *Changing Roles of Women in the Middle Years*.

As the reader may recall, in the early 1950s, Havighurst had recommended—at least to Australians—that gender roles be firmly defined and shaped from birth (Johnson, 1993, p. 61). Moreover, Havighurst held the families, the schools, and the churches, responsible for the successful outcome of adolescents internalizing the social norms and learning the gender social roles while becoming intellectually, emotionally, and financially independent from parents. Havighurst's adolescents were to comply with a "set of trainings and material arrangements, to think, act and desire according to a particular set of rules or norms which defined how the self-actualizing individual should operate" (p. 62). What did he advise for the mothers of these adolescents, who, unlike the unmarried career women, now had time on their hands?

Havighurst's three tasks for adult women were identity, intimacy, and emotional and intellectual expansion. The young "modern woman" achieved her identity through emotional independence from parents, paid work, or marriage, while intimacy was achieved in marriage, among siblings, or in "one's work and recreation" (1956, p. 16). "The major task" for a woman entering her middle years was to expand herself emotionally and intellectually to avoid narrowing her life into a "barren routine" (p. 16). Her challenge was to move beyond the traditional role expectations, select an activity, and create a new identity (p. 17).

Irrespective of age, women's roles were changing, there were more opportunities available and "the balance of authority between the sexes [was] becoming *more nearly equal*" [italics added] (Havighurst, 1956, p. 8). Women were wearing "slacks" and more were taking care of the family finances. Moreover, menopause had released energy that could now be channelled in new directions. Perhaps she could "draw upon the emotional capital" of her earlier years and regain self-confidence (p. 10). With, on average, 20 intellectual and creative years ahead, women now had more choices and freedom than the average males who were still "chained to their jobs" (p. 11). They could find a part-time job, choose to become more involved in various church and club activities, or devote more time to interior decorating and gardening, grandmothering, and cultivating new and old friendships, lacking in "our society" (p. 13).

Havighurst, though, anticipated and expected a woman entering middle life to extend and enlarge her caregiving responsibilities to children, grandchildren, husbands, and aging parents. While her children's emotional dependence on her would lessen, her husband and aging parents would become more dependent and demanding. The more fortunate couples would share some interests and activities, but as her husband aged, their relationship becoming "more nearly equal," he would need more "emotional support from her" (1956, p. 13). These were Havighurst's parameters within which a 1950s woman approaching her middle years could select an activity and create a new identity for herself.

Academic women presenting at the Symposium recognized the value of making education available to women entering their middle years to enable self-understanding, future focus and direction (Gross [Ed.], 1956). Research also was needed on a woman's role as she entered her middle years, together with how she met the personal challenges involved. Neugarten, "a student of human development" at the time, presented a research segment in progress (1956, p. 35). How did a woman "between the ages of forty and sixty-five" perceive her role, feel about herself, and view other women (p. 40)? Neugarten's research indicated that contingent upon personality and opportunities available, the older her age, the more a

woman viewed herself as more self-confident, independent, autonomous, and as the family matriarch (pp. 40-44). However, whether she acted out this self-view depended not only on what she "expect[ed] of herself vis-à-vis others," but whether her husband and children respected "her autonomy" (p. 44).

"This idea of being a person, of discovering and cultivating an individuated self [was] a new prospect for women" (Frank, 1956, p. 117). A Family Relations expert of these 1950s, Frank knew society's limited expectations of women, and the difficulties women likely confronted from family and acquaintances should they attempt to create new roles and relationships for themselves (p. 107). The crux of the matter for these women was how they could redefine their self-image and "find in social life opportunities and encouragement to be that self" (p. 114). After so many years as a housewife, perhaps she had come to "believe and feel that [she had] no *self*, no personality to be discovered or liberated" (p. 114). The social challenges and obstacles were also daunting. Women's life experiences generally were not valued; their social spaces "both polarized and complementary to men's," meant their success in the pursuit of new activities depended upon males' understanding, appreciation, and acceptance" (p. 126). Finally, there were the traditional roles and images of womanhood indoctrinated and internalized by institutions such as the "theological, legal, literary and other teachings which over the generations have attempted to define feminine tasks" (p. 126). Moreover, "the expectation that mature women will volunteer to do simply clerical jobs would be an insult to the intelligence of most mature women, as well as a waste of time and abilities, if they were not persuaded of their own inferiority" (pp. 122).

In 1968, interviewing 100 professional men and women, Neugarten learned that health issues and body changes were more of a concern to the males interviewed, while only a few of the women "attach[ed] psychological significance" to menopause (p. 96). Instead, the women valued their newfound sense of personal freedom, time, and renewed energy to pursue "latent talents" and "new directions"—unfortunately, if married, as so many reported, just when their husbands were experiencing job stress, or boredom (p. 96). Nevertheless,

those interviewed saw themselves as in "the prime of life," with sufficient self-understanding, professional competence, and social prestige to "create many of their own rules and norms" (p. 98).

The above study completed (1974), Neugarten analyzed the data from the perspective of the individual's "state of mind," perceptions and intentions about middle life rather than concentrating on middle life as a "plateau or crisis" (1994, p. 135). In addition to the 1968 analyses, the interviews revealed fewer women in fulltime employment, yet more than 50 percent between the ages of 50 to 55 years were returning to the workforce, resulting in heightened status "relative to men" (1996, p. 139). The empty nest, too, was a "presumed crisis," the women interviewed finding it more stressful "coping with children in the home than "launched into adult society" (p. 152). Middle life divorce was a non-issue.

Neugarten (1987) noticed the shifts in attitude and mindset towards aging. Questions given in the 1960s to "a group of middle-class middle-age people" (p. 32) and given to a similar group in the 1980s clearly showed the blurring of stereotypical and traditional views on age-related behavior and the emergence of "the fluid life cycle" (p. 30). This fluidity was particularly significant beyond the middle years. An individual remained a "young-old" until his/her health and social involvement deteriorated. Age was relatively irrelevant. But spousal ties had weakened. Divorce and remarriage were not uncommon. "More women," too, were reentering classrooms and beginning "second or third careers up through their 70s" (p. 30). In fact, Neugarten observed a growing social acceptance of "old" becoming reserved only for those in need of special health and physical care (the "old-old" fragile sector of the population). The social clock had entered a different time zone.

Since the 1990s, feminist scholars have been challenging the ageism stereotypes, those "varieties of ageism directed toward women today [that] contribute to a picture of aging women as unproductive, dependent, rigid, weak, defenseless, morally old-fashioned, timid, ugly, senile, and lonely" (Rosenthal, 1990, p. 6). For example, Freuh (1994), interviewed

women artists 50 years and older who not only were focusing their art on the image of aging women, but also were experiencing the social and personal consequences of being viewed as aging artists. Fifteen artists' self-images reveal the dichotomy of attitudes towards aging. Six artists were overly conscious of their physical appearance, which negatively influenced their art, artistic contribution, and recognition. For nine artists, age was the positive element in their artistic success. As one said, "the changes in my body and appearance have not affected me as they have the world" (p. 271). Instead, one glimpses an overriding sense of integrity, audacity, recognition and respect, credibility, "the force of maturity," "energy and enthusiasm," that has age irrelevant to their art. These nine "old(er) women" view through female rather than patriarchal gendered lenses.

Forty-four year old Freuh's personal view of the female is thought-provoking:

"The daughters separate themselves from old women in a long-lived manifestation of patriarchal and filial control, the divide-and-conquer politics of female competitiveness; I am younger, prettier, better, so I will not identify with you. (1994, p. 268)

But Freuh had also experienced an older women's group's rejection: too young, she was "to take her daughter energy elsewhere" (p. 268). She does not suggest intergenerational connection amongst women. Instead, she recommends older women shun the "monotype" of the youthful image and words that stereotype their age and become aware and comfortable with the many and varied representations of who and what older women represent. One counters the disappearance of a Self from social view by maintaining a presence, by defying "compulsory heterosexuality's demand that the female soul-inseparable-from-the-body be feminine" (p. 277). And, above all, by recognizing that "the authorship of oneself as an old(er) woman is serious business" (p. 276).

Gilligan's middle-life women's issues involve "the unfinished business of adolescence" (1982, p. 171). The challenge is to move beyond the adolescent "fusion of identity and intimacy" (p. 159). A woman has reached maturity when "she does not abdicate responsibility for choice but rather claims the right to include herself among the people

whom she considers it moral not to hurt" (p. 165). Recovering an identity involves choices that maintain personal integrity; a woman determines her destiny, takes responsibility, recognizes and responds to her own needs. (Rather than self-sacrifice, it is the ethic of self-care and self-discernment).

Heilbrun, an American author and retired university Professor of Literature, writing in her 70s, saw a woman's transition into her 50s as a time of re-appraisal culminating in a new focus and direction "as vital a milestone in a woman's life as graduation, promotion, marriage, or the birth or adoption of a child" (1997, p. 1). At the age of 74 years, Katherine Hepburn said in an interview,

Some people feel we should be somber about our age. Well, I'm not. Youth are marvelous because they are young. I don't envy them—it is a waste of time yearning over things that are over. . . . In life what you need is horsepower. That and luck. You only fail when you give up. You can withstand failure as long as you don't give up. (Lewin, 1982, C6)

Such determination is the alternative to regret and despair. In her 80th year, Hepburn commented, "there are no rules except to know yourself" (Davis, 1989, p. 4). A New Zealand educator and writer, Sylvia Townsend Warner, recommended one "undertake something difficult" when one turns 50 (cited in Heilbrun, 1997, p. 44).

The Medium is Language

The Russian psychologist, Vygotsky (1934/1986), saw "the problem of thought and speech [as] the focal issue of human psychology" (p. lxi), and language as the creative mediator between the person and the environment. As "the primary function of speech is social," language use either inhibits individual development, or enables active participation in forming one's cultural context while internalizing its patterns and mores (p. 6). To the degree one develops a social consciousness, he or she discerns the language techniques intended to mold one's will to society's. One influences, whether actively engaged or passive (Freire, 1970, 1994; Mehan & Wood, 1983). There appears to be a connection between Vygotsky's theory on language and thought and the theory behind Freire's

education for liberation, pedagogical theory, and praxis which influences this study (1970).

Through a process of conscientization, the illiterate and semi-literate of Freire's society became aware of their oppression. Freire's pedagogy and practicum clarifies how language can be used as a tool for exploitation, or, through conscientizing—by “using his/[her] eyes in the reading of the world”—how an individual can become actively involved in reconstructing the environment (1994, p. 3). Where is a woman in this context?

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule: the Female, Language, and Context

Through extensive interviews with 135 women from rural and urban areas, of different ages, educational experience, class and ethnicity (from young-adolescent single mothers to academic students attending prestigious colleges), these American psychologists in their now classic study of *Women's Ways of Knowing: the Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (1986), set out to explore “how women learn and think about learning” (Belenky et al., p. 12). To what extent did these young women respect their personal judgment and decision processes and how did each perceive herself as a knowledge acquirer and a constructor of knowledge?

The underprivileged women revealed the incredible odds in attempting to discover the voice of the self, “having attended schools that only confirmed their fears that they had no intelligence to cultivate” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 14). Their findings reveal how a woman's internalized powerlessness, devaluation, sense of self and intellectual worth, is directly connected to the silencing, dismissal or degree of respect awarded her conversational style and ideas at the individual and institutional level—initiated and implemented by home and school (chap. 1).

These educators and scholars identify five different “perspectives” of the female voice. One may interpret this text as following the lives into womanhood of the young adolescent girls whose voices were silenced or numbed during their young adolescence as previously

described in this chapter. These five female voice forms, gender identifiers of the devaluation of the female mind, therefore pinpoint the road to recovering that voice, that Essence of Self.

Silence, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; *received knowledge*, a perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own; *subjective knowledge*, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited; *procedural knowledge*, a position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge; and *constructed knowledge*, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 15)

Women of *silence* and *received knowledge*, these authors learn, "have no voice at all. Conventional feminine goodness means being voiceless as well as selfless" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 167). As the text reveals, of these five forms, the pivotal voice enabling the female's development of mind is that *subjective*, intuitive voice, with few exceptions so clear in pre-adolescent years. This voice of inner protest denotes a shift away from being seen and not heard, deferential towards others, and away from being concerned that "develop[ing] their own power would be at the expense of others" (p. 46). This voice moves a woman towards self-responsibility, choice, and self-care, "personal integrity and strength" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 171), and towards "a maturity realized through interdependence and taking care" (p. 172). Becoming aware of this inner authoritative voice is her first stepping stone towards her inner strength, and a sense of Self (Belenky et al., p. 54).

"If one can see the self only as mirrored in the eyes of others, the urgency is great to live up to others' expectations, in the hope of preventing others from forming a dim view" (Belenky et al., p. 48). Gaining one's subjective voice lessens the power of others' mirrors to manipulate the social spaces, to control one's behavior—levels of power hierarchically constructed for both genders. Conscientizing begins, moving beyond "failed authority" (p. 57). Listening to 135 women's voices from diversified ethnic, class, educational, and

geographic backgrounds, the root cause and acts of violence and violation against the female is clarified, that systemic violence of a patriarchal society (the umbrella under which both male and female stand).

Many subjectivists had had parents or husbands who belittled them or squelched their curiosity or chastised them for questioning. Remembering back, their world had felt unpredictable and fragile, insecure and impermanent. . . . Society teaches women to put their trust in men as defenders, suppliers of the economic necessities, interpreters of the public will, and liaisons with the larger community. . . . They are the esteemed teachers, the religious spokesmen, the medical, the military, the corporate, the respected creators. (Belenky et al., 1986, pp. 57-58)

Furthermore, as the reader is reminded, males claim the rational and objective voice. "It is likely that the commonly accepted stereotype of women's thinking as emotional, intuitive, and personalized has contributed to the devaluation of women's minds and contributions, particularly in Western technologically oriented cultures" (Belenky et al., 1986, p 6).

Women within this text readily recognized a personally significant event that triggered their move into the subjective voice. A number recalled a father and/or boyfriend, husband, or trusted male colleague, who had consistently over-ridden her voice, silenced her questions, and confused her thinking. And a mother who had lost her self, subordinate, submissive, defeated, who did "not speak in a different voice, but had no voice at all. Conventional feminine goodness [meant] being voiceless as well as selfless" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 167). It was while rediscovering a right to her voice, mind, thoughts and feelings, that trusted and reliable support from other females and males—or, in some instances a female therapist—was crucial (chaps. 3, 8). Somewhat disquietingly, while it may be a contributory factor, a female's voicelessness is not dependent upon (nor caused by) a lesser education, poorer socioeconomic circumstances, or an ethnic background (p. 160).

A choice: responsiveness towards the Self. Therefore, understandable perhaps in the process of reclaiming her voice, "there was no school, no teacher, no book that taught her these lessons" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 57). Instead, within voice-impoverished families, where silencing replaces dialogue, activities as simple as reading, music, or journalling,

opened the world of the imagination beyond "emotional difficulties and intellectual deficits" and towards possibilities (p. 163). However, change isolates. A woman loses her subjective, intuitive voice when she enters the male domain of procedural knowledge, and follows the steps (p. 134). "There is no sense of an authentic or unique voice, little awareness of a centered self" (p. 134).

Together with these authors, one views the constructivist women psychologically the most at risk. "All went through a period of intense self-reflection and self-analysis when they chose to 'move outside the given' by removing themselves psychologically, and at times even geographically, from all that they had known" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 135). Women spoke of experiencing dismissal, of not being listened to, or worse, of being closed out. To regain their intuitive "authentic" voice necessitated they "jump outside the frames and systems authorities provide and create their own frames" (p. 135). Knowing how they could make a difference, and wishing to participate in a way that included their perspective, they instead experienced isolation and exclusion; they were not adhering to the status quo expectations of their social group (p. 148). Without a significant person and/or community, the constructivist woman likely withdrew once more into silence, "accommodating the needs and ground rules of men out of the sad wisdom that change does not come easily" (p. 148).

Belenky and her American coauthors live within one patriarchally designed nation of the Western world. By focusing on the female (woman's) voice, they have identified the languaging strategies that define a woman's role to "keep her in her place" through young-mid- and middle adulthood. Perhaps disquieting to some readers, not surprising to others, is their finding that

even the most privileged women in our sample expressed the need to be accepted as a "person," as opposed to being oppressed or patronized. Privilege does not ensure freedom from oppression. . . . Indeed, highly competent girls and women are especially likely to underestimate their abilities. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 196)

CHAPTER III - METHOD

The Context

Ten women bridging their 50s and entering their middle adult years are the focus of this study. In the 1950s, during their adolescent years, while autonomy and self-determination was the educational goal for youth (i.e., male) as our Literature Review has shown, the young female American "perfect girl" and the Australian "modern girl" were culturally constructed into a deferential role, their education, work roles, and social status institutionally pre-determined and defined. Self-actualization was a "set of trainings, rules and norms" (Havinghurst, cited in Johnson, 1993, p. 62), rather than Maslow's "unfolding of potentialities" (1954, p. 296). What effect did this constructing of her socialized gender self away from her Essence of Self (her Dream, core identity and her authentic voice) have on these 10 women's middle adult passage?

I have observed women bridging their 50s living their lives as a work of art in progress. What does this "work of art" represent? Why do some women retrieve a lesser-used or dormant talent? Are these women on a quest towards a separate identity? Or are they, as Erikson suggests, like males, in a stage of generativity vs. stagnation, developmentally moving towards a final stage of ego integrity or ego despair? The women of this study appear to have recognized, and are quietly inserting, their contribution into the social fabric. While doing so, does a woman engage other women and/or men in this process, and if so, how?

What, then, *is* the Essence of Self in women entering their middle adult years? How might women entering middle adulthood achieve Erikson's sense of wisdom? Finally, when women entering middle adulthood move creatively and/or intellectually beyond the traditional socially-prescribed roles, do they *fashion* their lifeworlds, their life history into a work of art? With these questions in mind, my central question became:

What is a woman's lifeworld experience as she approaches and crosses that bridge into her middle-adult years?

Complementary questions which guided my enquiry process were:

- *What are women intuiting? What is being consciously or unconsciously sought?*
- *Is there a connecting link between adolescence, young adulthood (20-25) and middle life in this pursuit?*
- *How might women determine their ego integrity? What might be this process? Does a woman face barriers, either external or internal obstacles she must negotiate? If so,*
- *How is anomie experienced? For a woman entering middle adulthood, is her experience of anomie similar to a male's role confusion and search for meaning? Are the interpretive constructs derived from classical psychology adequate?*
- *What possible significance may 10 women's stories have for females of different ages?*

METHOD

When the woman's voice is included in the study of human development, women's lives and qualities are revealed and we can observe the unfolding of these qualities in the lives of men as well. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 7)

My intent is to further the understanding of women's development in the life cycle. As I have incorporated the lifeworlds of 10 women who live in three different countries, I have chosen an eclectic methodology, drawing on both ethnomethodology and phenomenology, as will be elaborated upon subsequently.

I have chosen a human science rather than a natural science approach, emphasizing experiences, co-discovery, and description (Becker 1992; Giorgi 1985; Osborne, 1990, 1994). "Phenomenologists investigate people's experiences of life events and the meanings these events have to them" (Becker, 1992, p. 8). I was also drawn to the ethnomethodologists, Mehan and Wood's (1975) reconstitutive approach to social structurings, specifically, their hermeneutic spiral of meaningfulness (i.e., past

interpretations and new understandings move one forward).

When a sociology scholar and academic suggested Moustakas's renowned work, *Loneliness*, I discovered the heuristic-phenomenological approach, detailed and elaborated upon by Douglass and Moustakas (1983) and Moustakas (1990, 1994). Their approach was the link I had been missing, for while "phenomenology ends with the essence of experience, heuristics retains the essence of the *person* [italics added] in experience" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 43). It was "this essence of the *person* in experience" that needed to be retained in conjunction with the reconstitutive approach—each individual participating in the sensemaking and ordering of his or her lifeworld.

For this reason, I included theatre, movies, popular magazines, and novels in my literature review, as this is a part of a woman's internalized lifeworld history, absorbed as a part of her socialization into the culture of that time. This review of literature became a part of the sociocultural and sociohistorical background data, an essential component of each woman's, and my, lifeworld and languaging. My research is a three-way dialogue: • to varying degrees interacting throughout the analysis process with the women interviewed; • with my thoughts and reflections upon conversations and literature reviewed; and, • writing towards a dialogue with a reader.

In viewing life as a process rather than as a product, vulnerabilities are challenged scholastically by becoming personally involved as an integral part of the analysis. Mehan and Wood's "method requires the gathering and analysis of materials which are objective in their first appearance and which include the researcher as a constituent part" (1975, p. 215).

Framing the Question

Framing my question is the image of the hermeneutic spiral discussed by ethnomethodologists Mehan and Wood (1975). Within the hermeneutic spiral, each

individual is both independent of (and interactive in) her or his environment, mutually reconstituting meaning. The following explains the concept in a little more detail.

Ethnomethodology: Slanting One's Perspective

"Ethnomethodology is concerned with the methods by which social actors construct 'everyday life' social realities"(Gephart, 1978, p. 556). I used Mehan and Wood, as the women of this study remain actively involved in reconstituting their lifeworlds. My study is grounded in this personal lifeworld. *I wanted to know how the process of change evolves an individual, how commonsense logic and intuition are used as one sensuously (i.e., the senses) reconstructs one's world, how a life evolves into a work of art—my metaphor for a descriptive study of women bridging their 50s evading the social silencing, "smalled" spaces, and "faceless lanes" of life, in short, Ageism and the psychosocial construction of The Old Woman.*

"Ethnographic research focuses on the experience of the group through abstraction of a shared experience" (Osborne, 1994, p.178). Ethnomethodology may focus on both an individual and on group experiences in the one study. Mehan and Wood view, and request that each of us view, as "I." How I am socially determined and how I, in turn, may socially determine "I" is their *Reality Ethnomethodology*. They clearly outline social and institutional intention (conscious or not) to mold the person to fit the scenic practices and scenes.

Various ethnomethodologists indicate how reality is constructed and frequently assumed as "there" by investigating "how a shared social world is possible at all" (Walsh, 1972, p. 20). There is status degradation (Gephart, 1978); everyday interpretive *verstehen* [understanding] (Walsh, 1972); language use, rules, and social processes (Phillipson, 1972); artful practices and typification (Garfinkel, 1967); and elementary classroom student behavioral categorisation (Mehan, Hertweck, Combs, & Pierce, 1982). At the theoretical and cultural

evolutionary or revolutionary praxis level, Freire's progressive liberation pedagogy (1989, 1994); and "a feminist poststructuralist [recognition] that the 'politics of knowledge' and 'the politics of identity' constitute each other" in organizational practices, knowledge and experience combining to form the glass ceiling (Calás & Smircich, 1997, p. 238).

As I researched and reviewed literature, and as each woman reviewed her life experiences from the 1950s to the present, language (words, affect, and silences) also became a prime focus. The ethnomethodological approach assisted me in highlighting subtle changes in the social milieu, as well as the various psychosocial and intrapsychic expectancies and pressures each woman experienced during her different life stages. Perhaps the greatest value of ethnomethodology is that one becomes aware of *how* culture is reinforced through language and gesture patterning. One becomes aware of "language games" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 5e; Mehan & Wood, 1975; Phillipson, 1972; Silverman, 1972) and, more importantly, *how* one is structured personally and institutionally to secure hierarchical and gendered positions. A sociologist, Garfinkel (1967), used the term "artful practices."

Garfinkel, perceiving how fragile "reality" can be, and believing from the sociological point of view that "the moral order consists of the rule-governed activities of everyday life," conducted research "demonstrations" together with his graduate students to uncover a "neglected" component, namely, "the definition of the commonsense world of everyday life" (1967, pp. 35-36). These fascinating series of studies—within the home, the court system, a hospital psychiatric admission centre, and of a transvestite, Agnes (see below), reveal the language games assumed, the conversational sabotage involved. These games confuse, dismantle, and breach an individual or individuals to ensure a bureaucratic group's status, or to successfully pattern the social milieu—as does Agnes, the transvestite, who models female-gendered talk and behavioral patterns. The most valuable of Garfinkel's demonstrations for this study (p. 58) was the uncovering of the "three breaching conditions" through which a person's self-understanding, naiveté, and trust are challenged or deliberately unravelled to undermine self-esteem, self-concept, social "face," place, spaces, and identity.

These three are: • that one can't remove oneself from the scene; • one is taken off-guard and targetted through action and language sabotage, including the silencing of one's explanations or reflexivities; and, • total withdrawal of support by any other person present.

The German philosopher, Wittgenstein (1953), viewed "the *speaking* of language as part of an activity, or of a form of life" (p. 11e), later elaborated upon by Mehan and Wood both theoretically and in educational research. There *are* no fixed rules, rather, there are assumed rules, altered through experience, as Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Pedagogy of Hope* clarifies (1970, 1994).

To elaborate, working with Brazilian and Chilean illiterates socialized toward an internalized "rightness" of oppression, Freire (1970) used a series of codifications (descriptive photographs or slides) to encourage conversation and conscientization. He used the same process on his first visit to New York and the ghetto (1994). Joining a group of Blacks and Puerto Ricans in one of their homes, he showed a picture of their street, a garbage pile at one end. Asking where this garbage pile was brought denial—the street was in "Latin America" or "Africa"—there was quite a resistance to admitting the street as their own (Freire, 1994, pp. 54-55). Commented Freire, "*The teaching of the reading and writing of the word to a person missing the critical exercise of reading and re-reading the world is, scientifically, politically, and pedagogically crippled*" [italics added], (1994, pp. 78-79). One's educated consciousness is shifted, is sublimated, resisted, yet ultimately conscientized through praxis. In conversation with Freire, Fromm remarked that this pedagogy was similar to psychoanalysis, only at the historico-cultural and political level (1994, p. 55). It is this process of socialized anaesthetization, denial, educational-, religious-, and home-languaging practices that the ethnomethodologists conscientize.

How Were Mehan and Wood Instrumental in This Research?

Ethnomethodology, therefore, does not relate directly to a method of sociological research but to a probing examination of the nature of social action and the

accounts (both lay and professional) of social processes. (Silverman, 1972, p. 192)

I did not look at the physical world, at organizational structures, but at *observant* persons restructuring their lives. In conversation, I observed and listened to them talk *about* this process.

A sociologist, Garfinkel (1967), disagreed in his text with a fellow sociologist, Parsons, that an individual as a "competent" member of a social collective follows and complies with social rules (p. 57). Such an individual, he wrote, would be a "cultural-," "psychological-," or "judgmental dope" (p. 68). Garfinkel demonstrated instead that persons work within limits and constraints, norms and rules, while manipulating social order (p. 57). Mehan and Wood (1975), "rely[ing] on Harold Garfinkel's work more than references reveal" (p. viii), believe social order is reconstituted and co-constituted through structurings—persons, creatively, or not, the reality participants. Using the hermeneutic spiral of meaningfulness, these authors see past interpretations and new understandings moving one forward. One is continuously interpreting, understanding, observing and reflecting. While there may be a finite world, there is infinite action. Mehan and Wood integrate the Western constitutive philosophy (Plato's Rational Man of Ideas) and the deterministic (the World as the pivotal point, the human being essentially unimportant). They see these as mutually constitutive and interrelational as one *involves* oneself with humanity and the universe, both. Hierarchy can now be replaced by viewing self and others as "an artist, every act creative, every moment mysterious, as the understood horizon of the moment is inexhaustible (p. 203).

I believe this hermeneutic-spiral concept explains the internal psychological development possible for an individual, that it is related to the psychologist Maslow's (1954) concept of self-actualization. Maslow's theory is that, given the opportunity, an individual extends and expands his/her potentiality towards humanity and cultural enhancement as he/she strives for aesthetic and cognitive development, those higher order "growth needs" of "knowledge, understanding, goodness, justice, truth, beauty, order and symmetry" (Maslow, 1954, 1962, 1964).

Why the Hermeneutic-Dialectic Approach? Taking the cue from Wittgenstein (1953), Mehan and Wood (1975) "view ethnomethodology as a form of life" (p. 3). Appreciating "diversity" rather than mindless conformity "as a sign of strength," (p. vii) they "envision ethnomethodology as a collection of practices similar in purpose to the practices artists and craftsmen teach and use" (p. 238). These authors are interested in observing how individuals (including themselves) face choices and use common sense reasoning rather than blindly following authoritarian rules.

A person's every action is creative; it reflexively alters the world. The person begins with certain materials that set limits, and then acts and in acting alters those limits. These new limits form the material of another creative act, ad infinitum. (Mehan & Wood, 1975, p. 203)

Mehan and colleagues' (1982) observations of a classroom empiricized this concept. Videotaping the conversational and behavioral interactions between students and teacher during a classroom lesson, they were interested specifically in observing the process of selecting students for remedial assistance. How was a student selected? What they discovered was that a teacher's classroom behavior was based on common sense and practical reasoning skills, which could not adequately translate into bureaucratic documentation. The simple referral to remediate a problem resulted in a possibly permanent, stigmatizing label, socially inhibiting, and psychologically debilitating. A special educator's testing resulted in a social "fact" that negatively objectivized a child. This study revealed how. This example is important, as the classroom is one microcosm of social spaces, of life. Similar occurrences continue within every institution and miniscule construct (e.g., work places, family, religious institutions), throughout one's life.

Common sense "folklore" in ways of reading, experiencing and interacting with the world around one, both inter- and intra-psychologically, psychosocially and sociohistorically, are absorbed tacitly, particularly during the preschool years and during the classroom and playground interaction of the elementary years. There is both enculturation and

indoctrination throughout all institutions (including that of one's family) as one identifies one's self, and in turn is identifiable, as a family or social member.

Throughout their text, concentrating on language usage in various social structurings, these authors "have chosen to ask not *how* order is possible, but rather to ask how a *sense* of order is possible" [emphasis added] (Mehan & Wood, 1995, p.190). Using the image of the hermeneutic spiral, these researchers illustrate the interactive, continuous process of change within each person, between and among individuals, from the creative impact of sensations, situations and conversations.

"Ethnomethodology treats social science as one more reality among the many," and "the imposition of one reality on another necessarily distorts the reality studied" (Mehan & Wood, 1975, pp. 37-38). Through their methodological design and research method these authors highlight *how* one is enculturated. While one may be unaware of the process, one is not passive. Once one is conscientized, using their reconstitutive approach, one reflexively interprets continuously, using symbols (language and imagery) and praxis to consciously reinterpret and reconstruct meaning. Mehan and Wood's ethnomethodology, therefore, is both a political act and actions involving changes interactively, primarily through languaging activities.

Phenomenology is the methodology that concentrates on a person's *inner* lifeworld.

Research is part of every person's day-to-day life. Broken into parts, the word research means "to search again or in a new way." This is something all of us do on a regular basis, either to solve problems or to explore life. . . . the lifeworld is the laboratory of phenomenological research (Becker, 1992, p. 31).

Interweaving my Question Using Phenomenological Methodology

European philosophers Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Heidegger, and French psychologist Merleau-Ponty, moved beyond the scientific objectivity of persons, towards a phenomenological focus (Giorgi, 1985). The key phrase is Husserl's "back to the things

themselves," to a person's *lifeworld* experiences, "to the everyday world where people are living through various phenomena in actual situations (Giorgi, 1985, p. 8). This *lifeworld* is the uniquely personal, sensuous activity of sensemaking everyday relationships and events. Phenomenologist psychologists endeavour to get to the essence of these experiences, "the valuative, aesthetic, and ethical aspects which had previously been excluded by our narrow (natural-) scientific focus" (Davidson & Cosgrove, 1991, pp. 89-90). These essences are our prereflective, spontaneously non-premeditative ways of dealing with day-to-day situations, our praxis.

Phenomenology is a science, albeit a *human* science, seeking the intentionality of persons' feelings and actions, aware that these are influenced by sociocultural and sociohistorical conditioning. "The subject lives in the situation, but the psychologist understands it as 'being for the subject' . . . the specifically human mode of organization of consciousness" in process (Giorgi, 1985, p. 49). A researcher includes him/herself in the experience under study. It is for this reason that, as researcher, I became aware and acknowledged my pre-understandings. However, "bracketing [a presupposition] does not mean its elimination but a suspension of belief which is not the same as Cartesian doubt" (Osborne, 1994, p. 173). This means I did not ignore or negate my pre-understandings when I placed them in my abeyance file. I used them to *assist* the process of discovery of essences while keeping an open mind, prepared to shift my perspective, thus controlling for possible predetermined "findings" bias.

I have reviewed a methodology, and an example, showing the constitutive sociocultural "world." I have reviewed conscientization showing one's involvement and participation in the making of our "worlds," whether as a passive or active participant. A brief example of Freire's praxis indicates the potential dangers involved in persons' awakenings to the realization that they also impact their "world." Moving from a formerly passive acceptance to active participation may be seen as radical, as not conforming to the sociocultural, hierarchically oriented comfort zone, for as persons awaken to their impact in the world, as

they begin to alter their perceptions, activities and actions change.

What is Involved in The Altering of Perceptions? Why Might it be Threatening?

Take, for example, a novice actor and an accomplished actor-artist. Now imagine yourself as that actor or as that actor-artist in your daily lifeworld routine. An actor learns lines, plays his/her appropriate roles, conforming to a social director, a covert script. An artist, observing, absorbing, intuiting, defining, may not necessarily conform to a director, or a script. So, while an actor may become an artist, an artist is *not* an actor, but an *artiste*. An artist uses form. I have chosen a phenomenological methodology to uncover the essence of this personal form but, first, what appears to be script, what appears to be form in a psychological context?

What appears to be script? An American clinical psychologist, Moss, writes: "The narrowing of the horizon within which an individual envisions his future takes us into the realm of psychiatric disturbance" (1992, p. 92). Moss is concerned about what he sees as the increasing adoption by American psychiatrists and psychologists of Beck's "cognitive treatment" therapy, which "appropriates many themes and concepts from phenomenology, including the central concept of meaning" (1992, p. 87). However, "as teacher, striving to reeducate the patient," the psychiatrist or psychologist takes charge, directing and shortening the process (1992, p. 97). While this may be time-efficient and cost-effective, Moss sees the professional and patient co-constructing premature life meaning. His concern is that through applying "systematic technology for personal change . . . individuals choose to flee an encounter with the real-situation and refuse the ethical challenges of their lives; having failed the ultimate test, there may be no real turning back" (Moss, 1992, pp. 87, 101). In other words, as a novice actor follows directions, so the patient is directed and shaped.

What appears to be form? An American psychologist, Kugelman (1988), concerned about growing nihilistic attitudes together with mechanistic technology and man as automaton, writes bluntly, "we need to reconsider the soul" (1988, p. 159). He reviews and

encapsulates the main ideas of Lötze, a nineteenth-century German philosopher, psychologist, and physician; James, the American pragmatic psychologist, prominent in the first half of the 20th century; and mid-20th century, Merleau-Ponty, a French existentialist and psychologist, particularly known for his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), in which he re-emphasizes the body-as-subject. "As a body-subject, bodies are thoughtful bodies just as minds are embodied minds" (Merleau-Ponty, as elaborated by Becker, 1992, p. 16). Kugelmann endeavours "to steer a course between the vitalists and the machinists," towards "innovative understandings of the soul, which break from Scholasticism, Empiricism, and Idealism" (1988, p. 161).

Kugelmann's discussion and encapsulation of Merleau-Ponty's text, *The Structure of Behavior* (1963), specifically his chapter on "The phenomena of soul in perceptual experience," has clarified the meaning of psychological form (1988, p. 171).

A form is a unity, a whole, a meaning or a sense, expressed in the arrangements and activities of a set of particulars, in a situation that embraces the perceiver. Form is not any one of the facts or particulars . . . Neither is form an idea in observing consciousness . . . Form is a relationship of sense between the perceiver and the perceived, a physiognomic configuration. . . . The category of form allows us to affirm the distinctiveness of life without presupposing two different substances. Form (or structure) replaces substance for the understanding of both soul and body. (Kugelmann, 1988, pp. 171-172)

Kugelmann's article takes the soul beyond the automaton of specific religious creeds towards individual responsiveness and responsibility.

Speech, suicide, and revolution. Such acts are soulful because they intend to actualize a possibility not determined by social conditions. Such soulful acts are rare, as Merleau-Ponty realizes, because for the most part, behavior is virtually determined by social and biological conditions. Such is the ambiguity of situated freedom. (1988, p. 175)

What is soul then? "Soul is a transcendence of the given situation, a creation of meaning, a dwelling poetically on the earth" (1988, p. 172). This reference to soul, Kugelmann concludes, is not the traditional one of immortality, but rather points us towards transcending beyond a mechanistic viewpoint. A person takes responsibility for h/her life.

Aligning these insights with the ethnomethodological viewings enabled by Mehan and Wood, using their image of the hermeneutic spiral, assisted me in clarifying *how* 10 women form their lives by using their experiences to evolve this art, soul, this humanity. While I reflected on some questions, formed some assumptions, these assumptions were not hypotheses but rather were *self-reflective questions* on the basis of my life experiences—professional, situational, formal knowledge and a literature review (Becker, 1992; Giorgi, 1985; Moustakas, 1990; Osborne, 1992, 1994).

These articles also point to why I have had some question, even disquiet, about the term “*searching for meaning*,” and why I identify with the Canadian educator, van Manen, that “Phenomenological research is the practice of thoughtfulness [reflecting on] the *project* of life, of living, of what it means to live a life” (van Manen, 1983, p. i, emphasis added). Why did I also endorse the heuristic approach?

While close to a phenomenological approach, a heuristic search is characterized as a passionate, highly personal, self-searching commitment to inner truth. It has its own criteria and its own process. It is, in my judgment, a disciplined and intuitive search that explores, by every possible subjective means, the essence of personal experience, thus generating personal truth that may later be further tested. (Rogers, 1985, p. 7)

Heuristic Research

Theoretical Foundation

Like ethnomethodologists, heuristic phenomenologists use a researcher's, co-participants', and readers' tacit knowledges (Moustakas, 1990; Filmer, 1972). Moustakas's philosophical mentors are the philosophers Kierkegaard and Husserl; his psychological theoretical mentors are Rogers, Maslow and Allport. Kierkegaard believed each person is *unique*, with the ethical responsibility to inwardly reflect upon his/her particular qualities, determining, then developing his/her potential. For Husserl, *intuition* is the knowledge source of experience. “What appears in consciousness is the phenomenon” that reveals an essence, a knowledge source, awaiting “the impetus for experience and for generating new knowledge.” It can be

trusted as it is the source of our "*apriori* knowledge," our "pure essences" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). The psychologists Rogers, Maslow, and Allport were all optimistic, positive viewers of human nature. As clinical psychologists and theorists, Rogers explored and explicated the fully-functioning individual; Maslow, the qualities of a self-actualizing person; and Allport, the functionally autonomous individual.

Application

Heuristic research begins with the primary researcher's "puzzlement," some disquieting question that reappears at intervals from the recesses of one's being. Once one engages this process, the puzzlement continues to move in and out of consciousness as one continues with everyday routine. A growing urgency concerning this puzzlement builds, and one sets out on a journey of discovery to uncover its essence. Are there others who have had, or are having, this experience? At first one researches independently, dependent upon one's personality style. (For example, in my case, it took the form of retreats, courses, reflective solitude, journalling, travel, art and music classes, esoteric readings, conversations). Eventually, one engages others who appear to be experiencing the same phenomenon—or they engage you.

Whatever an individual's initial process, this preoccupation, this engagement, continues throughout. What may initially appear as self-absorption is, rather, *introspection* and *disquiet* as one engages in indwelling. "Emphasis on the investigator's internal frame of reference, self-searching, intuition, and indwelling lies at the heart of heuristic inquiry" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 12). This emphasis remains, but extends to include co-participants who assist in revealing the essential essence of this experience. The aim of this research is to "suggest a process that affirms imagination, intuition, self-reflection, and the tacit dimension as valid ways in the search for knowledge and understanding" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40). It is a creative, imaginatively challenging and demanding research process. "The focus in a heuristic quest is on recreation of the lived experience; full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person" (Moustakas, 1990, p.

39). How is this process of self-discovery formalized? Moustakas outlines the five initial inner processes engaged upon (pp. 20-27). Briefly, these are; 1) *tacit knowing*, tapping the knowledge that we have but are unaware of, bridged by 2) *intuition*, forming "patterns, relationships, inferences," towards 3) *indwelling*, by introspective reflection, one discovers the essences of the puzzlement, towards a "creative synthesis," and 4) a *focusing*, that provides the disciplined commitment to the question, towards the discovery of the core meaning, each individual's foundation, 5) the *internal frame of reference*, one's senses, thoughts and feelings about the phenomena.

There are six phases that then guide the heuristic research process (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 27-37). Briefly, these are: 1) *initial engagement*—discovering and focusing the prickling disquiet as described above; 2) *immersion*—a spiralling interweaving engaging to varying degrees the unconscious, subconscious and conscious thought processes; 3) *incubation*—detaching, placing the question on the "backburner," applying oneself to other activities while the unconscious processes of one's body, mind and affect take charge; 4) *illumination*—the "ah hah" experience. Some "missed, misunderstood, or distorted realities make their appearance." It "feels right" viewed from every perspective; 5) *explication*—examination and organization of all facets of the question, unique to each person and researcher, yet with key themes. These "essences of the experience" now become, 6) a *creative synthesis*—imaginatively illustrating the core of the experience. Ultimately, *validation* of the above processes requires engaging responsively, in addition to one's self, each co-participant and readers in the outcome.

"Only the experiences with the phenomenon are engaged, not how history, art, politics, or other human enterprises account for and explain the meanings of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 19). In this study, each co-participants' art, writing, musical composition or text displayed *how* she evolved the experiential meaning, back to the Essence of the Self, towards further contribution in community. "In heuristics, the focus is exclusively and continually aimed at understanding human experience" (1994, p. 19). My

study question process was similar to undertaking a life review. In a life review, one overviews one's life, reflecting on various experiences. The outcome ranges from despair to wisdom (Erikson, 1963). Bergmann's film *Wild Strawberries* gives one example. While the key actor, Dr. Borg, professionally successful and journeying to receive his honorary degree, exudes composure and appropriate deportment, his inner turmoil as he reflects upon his life unravels towards despair, viewed with his mind's eye, for us, the audience, depicted in vignettes (Erikson, 1978). This formal research journeying was similarly introspectively reflective and interactively engaged. Applying this film example to Moustakas's five processes and six phases of the heuristic research process, the audience views Dr. Borg moving through the five processes together with Bergman's analysis (the six phases).

All components are considered in heuristic research. For example, in addition to the verbal interview, several of the women illuminated my central and complementary questions with concrete examples of how their lives were processing. I was shown paintings, silkscreen banners, needlepoint, quilting, walked around a garden (one woman's creative release and therapy), greeting cards, a thesis, and, somewhat later, participated in a weekend workshop experiencing an alternate form of therapy that had successfully negotiated "a boulder" for another. I also visited each woman's home and/or studio. All revealed the essence (core or depth) of the person, further illuminating her personality and spirit.

The Participants

Selecting co-participants on the basis of familiarity with the experience under study is in keeping with phenomenological research (Becker, 1992; Giorgi, 1985; Moustakas, 1990). Eleven middle-class, middle-income women between the ages of 49-59 years were purposefully selected, volunteered, or were suggested. Although interviewed, one of the women later requested withdrawal as her days had become too traumatic, and she felt too scattered to continue. The remaining 10 women actively participated at intervals from interview to write-up. These women live in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Their length of formal education varied; five of the women are university graduates (three Masters

level, two Doctoral level), three hold music diplomas. However, as the focus of the study involved the perceived interaction of creativity and intellect in enlarging a lifeworld aesthetically towards ego integrity, all were, and remain, currently involved to some degree in music, art or academics. At the time of the interview, each woman had recently experienced, or was currently experiencing, a life challenge or crisis. At that time (and since), to an outside observer each woman appeared to be rechannelling that negative experience into a positive force.

The Researcher as "Reality Participant"

Of similar age to my co-participants, I have lived equally within the cultures of Australia/New Zealand and Canada. One country contains my childhood and adolescent memories; one, my early-adult years (20-26 years of age); one, my life to the present. Professionally and socioculturally I have an understanding of, and appreciation for, the similarities as well as some of the subtle cultural differences within and between each country, as I correspond with friends and family and regularly revisit both Australia and New Zealand.

Data Collection

Personal experiences initially prompted this research, based on Moustakas's guidelines (1990, 1994). As the phenomenological focus is recall of experiences rather than "thoughts about the phenomenon" (Becker, 1992, p. 39), the face-to-face interview of approximately 2 hours was taped, each woman choosing her location. After the initial question (see Appendix D), the interview questions were open-ended, i.e., the interview became more conversational in style with the remaining seven questions, for the most part, naturally following in conversation. In keeping with the non-reflective, spontaneous nature of phenomenological research, the participant was aware of the nature of the research but not the actual questions. "The aim is to elicit naive descriptions of the actuality of experience as it is lived rather than to collect embellished and narratized accounts that are based upon

what the participant believes is expected of the researcher" (Osborne, 1994, p. 171).

Each woman received a copy of the interview, wrote comments, additions, or alterations she felt essential, then returned the transcript. Additional data collection (e.g., art work, writing, observations and conversations), while intermittent, were examined on an ongoing basis. Further questions or clarification were continued by telephone, fax, or e-mail. Pertinent off-tape conversations, observations, reflections and initial insights were documented. This information was dated, coded, and stored, maintaining confidentiality. I immersed myself in our experiences as Moustakas suggests, journaling my intellectual and affective experiences and reactions. Each participant chose or approved her pseudonym, her background details kept as confidential as she determined. An edited copy of her interview, abstract, and a copy of my analysis were returned for her comments. The final draft completed, a copy of both the interview and abstract was once again sent or handed to her.

Data Analysis

I used a combination of three processes. Moustakas (1994), when uncovering the "essence" of a phenomenon, uses the following procedures:

- *Epoche (bracketing)*. The intention is to suspend preconceived notions, to refrain from judgment. I imagined myself as that person, in effect, standing and walking in her shoes.
- *Phenomenological reduction*. I interpreted this process as immersing oneself as much as possible *into* the experience of each life, including my own. "The final challenge is the construction of a complete textural description of the experience . . . person, conscious experience, and phenomenon (p. 95)." (See Chapter IV).
- *Imaginative variations, horizontalizing*. One views from many perspectives. "How did the experience[s] of the phenomenon[a] come to be what it is (p. 98)?" By so doing, one uncovers themes together with individual truth-paths to the essence of the phenomenon under study. I used this process to "discover" each person's Essence of Self (Chapter IV), as well as towards a synthesis—common essences of being female and moving into one's 50s and middle adulthood (Chapter V).
- *Synthesis of meanings and essences*. What are the invariants, what is unique, possibly a

core meaning or essence of this experience under study?

To facilitate this process, I adapted the work of two psychologists, Brown and Gilligan's (1992) "relational process," i.e., their "Listener's Guide." Theirs is a concentrated and focused attention on a female participant's spontaneity or hesitancy with languaging (words, voice tone, pauses, sighs, silences, tears, laughter, facial expression, body language), as indicative of psychological health. "Voice because it is embodied, connects rather than separates psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and culture [as] inherently relational" (p. 20). When analyzing their data, these authors ask four questions, listening for a relative consonance or dissonance in speaking about relationships, whether towards self, or involving another person. These four questions are: 1) Who is speaking? 2) In what body? 3) Telling what story about relationship—from whose perspective or from what vantage point? 4) In what societal and cultural frameworks (pp. 19-21)? Journalling the four questions "as if the person" assisted me in recreating each woman's lived experience as she had described in the interview, in seeing the patterns and themes of her life, and her life perspective. This activity incorporated Moustakas's five processes.

Journalling my own questions engaged me in bracketing, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variations and synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). 1) How do I identify with this person? 2) How are our experiences similar, yet different? 3) Are there experiences we perhaps share? I wrote reflectively, immersing myself further into her experience, to assist in viewing from a number of perspectives towards our similarities as females in enculturated social spaces as well as to uncover my attitudinal bias. In following this procedure, while locating a participant's lifeworld (e.g., blocks, anomie, initiative, courageous process), I not only "locat[ed] the speaker in the narrative" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 27), but myself as well. This activity, together with the journalling of Brown and Gilligan's four questions, incorporated Moustakas's six phases.

Finally, to facilitate the above journalling process and obtain a simplified contextual

overview of each participant's life review, I used brown paper scrolls for each woman, and divided each woman's life journey from adolescence to the time of the interview into 10-year segments. Any significant life issues were listed under the following headings (drawn from the first interview analyzed and significantly relevant for the remaining nine women). Recording her adult ambition (adult identity, her Dream), I traced the development of this lifegoal through her *childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, her midlife, and bridging her 50s*, age-referencing each positive or negative experience (*Interests: Peak Experiences; Anomie: Thwartings & Blocks*). Any significant issue from the interview was itemized.

I followed the age specific *impact of losses on her psychological development and wellbeing*, columnning her *life losses, the psychic damage to her self-image*—any negative effects on her *body (health and internalised image), aesthetic, intellectual, and religious/spiritual development*—as well as her *coping style*, the positive actions and attitudes within each component. Next, I itemized how she challenged an obstacle, incrementally building her character together with her expertise, her *psychic capital*. What *problems/challenges* became *trigger points* towards her personal development, self-actualization and psychological health? And what *stepping stones: initiatives, intuitive "how" processes of self-care* did she undertake?

I then noted what I term *wisdom making: open doors taken, decisions made* to continue self-actualizing and moving closer to her centre, *towards the Essence of her Self*. What were specific age-related *turning points*, choices that turned a negative experience into a *growth-marker event* and how she in turn enables others' development *socioculturally, within her community*, and how she *positions herself economically*. Finally, what *role have support systems* taken throughout her life, specifically her *family, her friendships, her networking connections, and mentor(s)*.

My final section placed her adolescent Dream in the context of the present. I noted her *inner fortitude (independent direction)* and her *significant enablers and/or discouragers* on a

decision(s) made, a direction(s) undertaken from her adolescence forward. My questions as I itemized each woman's life history were: Were these steps incremental? Were these decisions conscious or intuitive? In the final column, *the Essence of her Self*, I noted what appeared to be personal qualities of character, values, general outlook and attitude towards self and others, indicated by how she explained her life choices. In short, I surmised her energy source or central core that motivates her life work and process at this time. Mehan and Wood's text together with Freire's philosophy assisted my reflections and analysis of the cultural timeframe that appeared to enhance or diminish each individual's lifeworld experiences.

The above processes clarified the depth and breadth of each woman's life while, at the same time, covering all the interview questions. These headings were not necessarily the named themes (either of each individual life—see chapter IV—nor necessarily obvious in the final overall themes—see Chapter V). Nevertheless, they formed the basis for each analysis and the final composite overview. In a step-by-step process, the issues listed on each individual scroll were used in writing up her life history and its analysis. For the final chapter, I drew from each individual scroll together with the analyses and identified the major issues overall.

Reliability, Validity and Control for Bias

Mutual respect, empathy, interest, cooperation and trust were present. "The question of validity is one of meaning" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32). Sharing reflections, questions, and interpretations with my co-participants served as a validity check. Following Boyd and Fales (1983), I asked the question, "Does that 'ring true' for me? test[ing] hunches against the data and against each others' understandings" as an additional acknowledgement of possible bias (p. 102). In addition to my journalings, I viewed this bracketing component as the pivotal point of validity and reliability. Hopefully, these activities will ultimately assist in reader rapport as "phenomenological research strives for empathic generalizability" (Osborne, 1994, p. 86). Nevertheless, one recognizes that inadvertent bias is always present as one's values, belief systems, and gendered social status introject. As well, one's psychosocial,

sociocultural, and socioeconomic life experiences also color one's analysis, understanding, rapport and empathy.

Delimitations

The number of interviewees from each country was small, and the geographic location was confined to three areas. The socioeconomic and cultural background excluded the more privileged woman, the disadvantaged woman, the ethnic and aboriginal woman. Yet I feel the nature of the research questions, the research design, and the choice of participants required this starting point. As a reality participant, my background must be somewhat similar in age, sociocultural experiences and education to those who participated in this study. Researching ego integrity and wisdom, but absenting the male lifeworld view also delimited my findings. But, as previously stated, I chose to focus solely on women, because a woman's *personal* account of her lifeworld experiences through the transition into her 50s has received sparse attention in developmental psychology literature and research. Hopefully, the 10 women's stories will encourage self-reflection as well as conversation among women *and* men.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the interview, each co-participant received a copy of the Letter of Consent, briefly outlining the question and purpose of the study, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, the right to withdraw from participation should she wish at any time, and the right to request withholding of some item of interview information. Each participant's signed and dated copy was filed (see Appendix E).

Taking into consideration the Literature Review and the Methodology, the 10 women's experiences in crossing the bridge into middle adulthood will now be examined.

CHAPTER IV - TEN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Crossing the Bridge into Middle Adulthood

At fifty, I concluded, a woman might celebrate a rite of passage, a ritual as regularly marked as a confirmation. Trying to develop a ritual for this crossroads—the point at which a woman has lived thirty years of adult life in one mode and must discover a new mode for the second thirty years likely to be granted her—I wanted to suggest, to (if I am honest) urge women to see this new life as different, as a beginning, as a time requiring the questioning of all previous habits and activities, as, inevitably, a time of profound change (Heilbrun, 1997, p. 1).

JACQUELINE

I think I always wanted to be a singer. Nobody pushed me; I became one. I gave up a good job as a secretary for a major company when I was 18 years old in order to make it happen. I was taking lessons, singing in a choir and doing the odd professional thing, and it was just like, "Well, I think I really want that." But then, my mother and father elected not to support me financially. They thought I had learned enough, that I had a good job—after all, that was life!

This was in 1957. Thankfully, the head of the Toronto Conservatory got me a job at the Conservatory when I enrolled part-time in the School of Music. I must have shown some promise. Wasn't that wonderful? I was scared to death of this man but he did so much for me. If only he was around to thank now. Actually, I was familiar with the Conservatory. I came from a musical family and as a 5-year old took eurythmics there. My knowledge of music continued from then on.

One year after I entered the Conservatory, I completed my ARTC. At that time there was no diploma when one graduated from the Opera school. People maybe didn't look for degrees at that time. Now they've changed their terms. From this Opera school I went into the Canadian Opera Company so there was a progression.

Until I married, I made my living as a singer. Quite a good living. When someone asks to see my resumé, I don't know where to start. I went on tour with the Canadian Opera Company, and on Canadian industrial tours; I sang on CBC radio, on television (I was a regular every week, and sometimes more), at conventions, at the Grey Cup celebrations and at the Board of Trade in Toronto. I was the soloist at the Royal York hotel on Sundays. I was asked to be one of two women backup singers for the Ed Sullivan show visiting Toronto,

although I declined as I was marrying two weeks later.

The day after we married, I came to a farm on the Prairies. Shortly after my arrival I auditioned and sang the lead role in an opera production in the nearest city. They had intended bringing in somebody from America. The newspaper reviewer commented on how very professional the production was. They asked me to sing the major role in the next production but I was pregnant by that time.

Our children became my priority from then on, although I did another show in Toronto, a television show in Winnipeg, and I opened a CBC radio station singing with the Symphony Orchestra. But once you have children you don't keep practising. There's nobody really teaching you, so your voice deteriorates. I never stopped singing. My husband and I sang duets for a time. We worked with a leading orchestra, we did commercials. I never took my hand out completely, but I don't think I did it well for quite a while.

I did only the one major role with that Opera Company. I auditioned again, but wasn't successful. It was when a new chorus master took over the chorus, about 15 years after we were married, and asked us for help that I went in and loved it. But you see, although later my husband and I had a small role in two productions, at that time I thought I would never sing solo again. I was smoking at that time, too—giving up, I think.

My husband and I also have had a different attitude towards our singing. I love it, it's my passion. Because it had been my career, I also regarded it as my business, as my profession. My husband, though, always discounted the idea that we were professionals, as it wasn't his main career. So I was a wimp and did a lot of things he said—after all, I was now married, as my mother reminded me.

I was home most of the time when our children were little. I often didn't have a car to get anywhere. Once the children were in school though, my husband and I toured the Province with a small Company. I didn't realize how confused I was when I was living at the farm, talk about wisdom when you can see where you've been. Now I see it was city versus country living, my art versus farm work, community, and family. Whereas my parents regarded each other as an equal, there is a hierarchy in the farm communities which I found hard. I'm only just coming to realize how much influence my mother-in-law had. She had a great deal to do with what my husband thought. But then it was too late between us. We should have been able to make the decisions together but we didn't. So I just gradually took more time.

It was a professional musician friend who encouraged me. She was wonderful! She made me see my talent and feel my desire to resume my singing. Although she doesn't think in terms of desire. She just said, You should be out there doing it!" She walked up the hall with me to a colleague's studio. I quit smoking, because she said "You've got to do that." And she also quit. It took me 5 years, but if you give up a crutch, it helps, it makes you grow. It was she who got me studying. I started opening this world again. By that time my children were

all into music of their own. I was still chauffeuring them all over the place, but now I had some music of my own as well. I remember feeling, "Yes, I've got to do this thing." I remember thinking, "There are two worlds here, the one at home with the kids, the family and the farm, and then there's the one that I've known that is more familiar to me, my music." I was in my 40s by this time.

I didn't join any choir. What impacted on me was my voice teacher's former teacher who arrived from Europe. Suddenly the world opened up to me again! I realized that not only was this man so musical but that I understood what he was saying! Wonderful! Just wonderful! I went to Europe for 6 weeks to study with him shortly afterwards. My husband later joined me for several weeks. And then we went over together again another time. There's a certain ego thing with singers and even if you're married that doesn't go away, you know. I'm serious! I realized this lately. Somebody in one of the Conventions I attended recently said something about a singer having "attitude." It's different from other peoples'; you are a singer. It's a big ego. You can't appear to have too much, you know, but it's there. It's something that carries you on stage. It creeps into other parts of your life; I think that's part of your strength!

But I was still reticent about becoming involved. I thought—and kept saying—"I'm too old to do this, I'm too old, I can't." I think perhaps hormones have a great deal to do with this; it wasn't until I had been through menopause that I had the strength to do it, to do what I thought was important, which was to get out there and share what I'd learnt, to give myself credit.

The farm community here is not generally supportive, unlike the society I grew up in. In this community it's very much the norm for the woman to support the man and his job, so, because the community pressure and expectations are always there and because they were important to my husband, I felt them. I mean, I was to retire. My children were all grown. I was to entertain, go to parties and agree with everybody, even politically. I was to support the community.

It was only once our children had begun university or their careers that I began teaching singing. It also helped to have so many music scores at home. A professional musician also had a great deal to do with this aspect of my career. She has the connections and is a wonderful people supporter. A mother had spoken with her as her 18-year-old daughter wanted to begin singing lessons. This musician suggested my name. That young woman was my first student. That was in the late 1980s. Then another young person asked me. That is how I began teaching. Some time later I advertised in a local store. I was enjoying teaching and I also now had a little money. The farm wasn't doing too well at that point and my husband had really cut back our household money. I thought, well, if I want to do something with this, I've got to do it on my own.

I didn't have a degree and I was starting to feel very uneducated. I wrote a letter listing my

experiences and what my children were doing, because they were succeeding and I felt I had had some part in that. I applied at the one College. Years before, the head of their Music Department had pushed me to be a teacher there and at that time I wasn't interested. I was a singer, I said, I didn't want to teach. How stupid of me. When you teach, you learn so much about what you do yourself. They didn't want me at this time, although they asked both my husband and I to adjudicate. At the same time, I also sent this application letter to another College. Their Music Department head telephoned me. "I had no idea you'd done all of this! It sounds wonderful! I've passed your letter of experience on to an instructor and she'll be in contact." I never heard back, so I continued teaching at home. I had 25 students when I received a telephone call from them. This was in the 1990s. How would you like to teach with us?" "Yes!" I said. But when they asked me to go to their downtown studio, my husband didn't want me to go. He had different reasons—I was paying them too much for the use of their studio was one. He was always very protective. I nearly delayed for 6 months, but I went. I don't think he sees anything to worry about now. In fact, he's very pleased and proud about it all.

The move to the College helped me to realize I have some worth, that I don't need to defend who I am and why I make certain decisions. I am also receiving growing support from colleagues and students. Their office staff give referrals as well, which is really nice! I have 40 students now. Recently, one of my students who has been with me for a number of years won the major Provincial competition. For some reason she wanted me as her voice teacher rather than one at the University. And then a little girl got a first in her competition. It really makes you feel, "hmm!" It gives you "attitude," you know?

I see a real future in front of me. It suddenly dawned on me one day after I had been at this college for 6 months or so. I was driving home and I thought, "Oh, am I ever happy!" (Maybe it was after I'd bought studio furniture. It was quite an outlay. People would come in and say, "You must have put out quite a bit." But that's an investment in my business, in the students' comfort). It was a warmth. It was like, "Now I know where I'm going!" And this can last forever, you know, teaching singing or having the ear to encourage young people. Young people, Trish, keep you honest. It's a funny feeling, it's for you. But you're going to help open it up for other young people because you're seeing the way. We're just ahead of that peak baby boom. Women have had education and experiences. It's society that thinks you're not to do that, that you're supposed to retire and look after your grandchildren.

I realize now that being confined to a life as a farm wife and housewife was not healthy for me. Even though I was strong enough to completely withdraw more and more into my music from 1977 on, I felt the rage and anger and blame and also blamed myself. It was very difficult to change the situation because of our children, even though I knew it was for the best. I found more and more happiness in my music. Now I'm so busy with teaching, I do less solo work. My husband, who has a good voice, still does solo work. That's enough for him at this stage, although he recently asked me to set up some lessons for him. It's the technique

he wants me to listen to. He'll pay me. I don't have the time otherwise—isn't that awful?!

Eventually I really would like to teach in Toronto. There are a lot of teachers there, friends of mine. When I visit my mother each month, I have a lesson. That really helps because this teacher goes to New York. So it's a "laying on of hands" sort of thing—really good professional development. This teacher observes what I fail to see myself. You see, I don't want to teach my technical mistakes to students. Then there are the Canadian Opera performances. To see and feel this professional energy and the excitement is wonderful. My husband and I attended the 50th Anniversary of the Toronto Opera School last year, and took part in their performance. Then later I attended the University December Gala. I encourage any of my students who are interested in a career to go there, because there's a lot of excitement, a lot of things happening, including a connection with Benjamin Britten's famous school and festival in Aldeburgh, England.

I've had two students go to McGill and one to Toronto. The adjudicators who audition students are haughty. It scares our young people who think, "They don't want us—after all, haven't they got all the people they want in Toronto?" I have adjudicated. I have been in the other areas of the Province and I think the arts have to be encouraged. Young people miss that if they're living a shallow, television-focused life. I want to help the young people experience music. I don't push it, but it's there if they want it. I make comments such as, "Do you think some of these other things are necessary?"

It isn't just the singing. I would like to have a hand in opening up an appreciation for music a little more in the Province. I think it's lacking. Working with the students of any age is important and maybe in a small way that's how to do it, but there's a bigger picture out there, I think, that's lacking. I'd like to be able to do something. It's almost a political thing. The support has to be there, the understanding that there are positions and careers in music where there aren't in many other areas. Look at all the musicals that are going on, all over the world! You've got to believe in that! I sometimes think some other teachers just take you up to a certain level and don't realize what's out there!

Our son had a teacher who gave up on him because he wasn't working. She couldn't see his potential. I think if a person is not working, then you really encourage him/her. Most of the time my students respond. Our son eventually returned to his music. He wasn't going to become a professional musician so entered another discipline when he began university. He'd said, "It's too easy! It's too boring." "Yes," I said, "but there's a lot more in it than you know." He didn't do at all well that first year so I suggested he transfer into Fine Arts for a year to regain his confidence. I simply said, "Well, maybe if you got a degree in music then you could go on to another one, but this at least gives you the confidence and you know you can do that!" He did, and now plays with a symphony orchestra.

My children love what I'm doing. They love it! They're all very nervous when I go to one of their concerts. I ask, "What for? I don't know anything!" "Oh you hear things, Mother."

Each one is involved in music. My husband and I feel very proud.

All singers have an ego, don't you think? Singing is much more than simply notes. It is also behavior. I don't mean ego in the bad sense. I mean having a sense of oneself. The study of music makes you feel humble. There is so much to know and so little time to understand what makes great music communicate to us.

Our task is to make something of our traumas and losses and our reactions to them. We can drift on in an impaired existence or, like the salmon, we can continue to respond to that which is within us and beyond us, and make the leap, and find it worth the effort as we take our part in the larger scheme of things. (Macnab, 1993, p. 23)

Overview

I first met Jacqueline in the late 1970s, when she and her husband joined a chorus for a season. During these rehearsals, we greeted each other, chatting occasionally. Apart from casual encounters from then until the mid-1990s, we lost touch with each other, although I was aware she had begun taking voice students. We reconnected several months prior to her participation in this study.

Jacqueline, a professional singer, vocal coach, and adjudicator, determined her identity during her late adolescence and young adulthood. As she said, singing is her passion, her profession. "I think I always wanted to be a singer," she said, unhesitatingly. She has maintained this conviction throughout her life. This artistic talent is the key source of her psychological wellbeing; her musical talent is her wellspring and energy centre, her personality's core. Jacqueline's zest for life is contagious. She radiates energy and encouragement towards others developing their potential. Her personality is dynamic, she has "style" and a natural, unaffected honesty. To my mind, Jacqueline is presently living her life as a work of art. Yet, from her account, there was a time when life became dulled, her Self scattered. How did this happen?

Was there a trigger point, a decision-taking time, a conscious realization that something had to change? What are some key indicators one can glean from *her* life towards maintenance of one's own psyche, towards the recognition of one's own essential qualities that are the foundation of one's own psychological wellbeing?

Some Consequences of Sociocultural Expectations

Expectations within her community. Jacqueline experienced midlife *anomie* initiated by a decision in her latter 20s that resulted in a gradual diminishment of her energy source, her centre, and the stifling of her authentic voice and passion for living. The Essence of her Self, her Dream of becoming a well-known singer, moved towards the edges of her personal lifeworld. The reason was primarily geographic in nature, and likely unanticipated. She left an established career and network of musical colleagues, friends and associates while correspondingly, in comparative isolation, adapting to traditional role requirements within an unfamiliar, socioculturally conservative lifestyle.

Unfortunately, following a successful starring role in an opera production shortly after she arrived, a pregnancy deprived her of the next lead role, and an unsuccessful audition from the third production. Jacqueline seems to have lost some self-confidence at that time, although possibly this relatively newly-formed professional Company were seeking national recognition, so therefore sought out-of-Province names. Wisely, though, given her professional credits, Jacqueline chose not to become a chorus or a choir member. Instead, she disengaged by largely focusing on her role as wife and mother. Her professional expertise (until her 40s) was now largely dispersed. She and her husband sang duets, adjudicated, did commercials; simultaneously, she focused on her children, encouraging their talents and sharing her expertise towards their musical understanding and enhancement. She never stopped using her talent, as she said, but within this traditionally oriented farming community, she existed through her husband and children. *Her* talent and personality foundation became an adjunct towards her husband's and children's development. Certainly, Jacqueline shows no resentment towards her husband's and

children's musical achievements; rather, it seems, she regrets that she didn't have the opportunity to continue on her pre-marital professional path.

Expectations within her marriage. Jacqueline stated that her parent's marriage had been one of equality. Marital relationships within her new community modelled the conservative tradition of hierarchical gender divisions in attitudes, roles and duties. Unlike Jacqueline, who adopted and adapted to his geographic and cultural viewpoints, her husband remained geographically distanced from (and in the main removed and unaffected by) her family and surroundings. "My parents regarded each other as an equal," Jacqueline said. As a wife in this "hierarchical farm community," socioculturally and socioreligiously, women were expected to support their husband's development, and accept their primary function as husband and child caregiver. Barely recognizing its effect, it seems Jacqueline became psychologically lethargic in her compliance to others' opinions of her role and her duties. She accommodated, as a wife and mother, the social code personally anticipated and socioculturally expected during the early 1960s of its adolescent-trained 1950s pre-contraceptive-pill woman. To cope, and perhaps in part defy, she began to smoke, which she now recognizes as "giving up." (Every singer knows how damaging smoking is to a singer's voice). This self-sabotage appears to have concretely reinforced an unhappiness she may not have perceived, hidden as it was in vague disquiet and duty to enhance the lives of those one cares for and about. Her traditional wife/mother role, her community's expectancies, her life and role as a farm wife, her out-of-Province "difference," all added to the lessening use of her independent singing voice, and, for Jacqueline, the lessening of her essential Essence of Self.

As well, possibly because of culturally different childhood life experiences, she and her husband had different priorities. While her husband, perhaps understandably, saw his profession and business farm-related, and his singing engagements as secondary, Jacqueline continued to retain a mental image of herself as a professional singer as her primary identity. *This was the anomie and issue Jacqueline needed to resolve as she entered her 40th year.*

Hers was a crisis of recognition of this identity, the need to use her singing voice, her very Essence of Self, soul or psyche. Moreover, I feel, Jacqueline's former professional economic base, her professional status, recognition and inclusion as a soloist prior to marriage, had continued to act as a motivational impetus towards maintenance of this identity—even when supposedly replaced by her role of wife and mother.

From her first child's birth when she was 26 years old to the pre-adolescent/adolescent ages of her children, Jacqueline concentrated on farm, husband, and children. She seems to have focused her dispersed musical energies from self to each child, sufficiently so that each of them now has a full-time professional musical career, although none of them is a singer.

The impact of sociocultural expectations. Looking backwards in time, Jacqueline sees the mental confusion of her menopausal years as perhaps the reason for her anomie. But, I believe, these years also emphasize the intentionality a sociocultural mythology has upon an individual's mind, body and affect. Jacqueline now gradually became aware of the psychic damage to her self-image, of a difference between her values towards marriage and community and that of her transplanted environment. Her musical family of origin, living in a large metropolis, were/are involved in and access the arts, and their homelife was/is one of respect and regard for equality. Her new home Province, community and family was a comparatively insulated Prairie small-town city with sparse cultural opportunities in comparison, where the families were (and remain) primarily traditional and work-ethic oriented. *Jacqueline's dilemma was this difference between her sociocultural and aesthetic values and those of her community. For Jacqueline, viewing from her perspective, singing also can be classified as work, meaning a worthwhile (respectable) occupation.*

What was the impact of the loss of her singing opportunities on a healthy psyche? Jacqueline, herself, had to recognize feelings. These were the grief stages. She took responsibility for her part in her situation, recognizing her anger and depression, analyzing its cause. Once done, then there was the recognition of that damage—low self-worth, the

label of defensiveness, her explanations, checking to affirm her decisions, adoption of a voice-destructive behavior (her smoking), a diffidence replacing her former self-confidence, and, by no longer practising, a virtual withdrawal from high-profile solo work. Jacqueline had been shutting down her psyche, her essence, and with it, her sense of self as of equal value to those she valued.

But this was her second stage. First, her body and affect indicated her major loss. She felt angry, depressed, thought of herself as too old, and rationalized that her fatigue was hormonal or menopause related. Aesthetically, withdrawing from solo work and not practising, meant a withdrawal and shutdown in this area, her strength, and the foundation stone of her personality. Since the 1980s, there has been a growing emphasis placed on certificates, diplomas and degrees. Intellectually and educationally, as she lacked that official piece of paper, Jacqueline was losing confidence in her expertise, her experiences and musical educational background. In reality, her professional experiences more than equalled an academic piece of paper. She had shown her internalisation of the ARCT academic knowledge and skill in the invitations offered, opportunities accepted, and successes achieved during and following the completion of her ARCT. Unfortunately, rather than receiving recognition of her achievements, support and affirmation within this farm community, it appears her artistic temperament was viewed as scatterbrained, as somewhat "flakey," thus effectively reinforcing her feelings of insecurity. Fortunately, while during her 30s Jacqueline had experienced less personal professional involvement vicariously through her children's involvement with music, she had also become known and had expanded her musical connections and contacts in multi directions. *Now Jacqueline began to recognize how she had not been using her exceptional singing voice and experience to include herself on her terms.* Entering middle life, she challenged her community's sociocultural inhibitors and assumptions.

Renegotiating her identity. The brief vacuum that followed was possibly traumatic before Jacqueline began using small, deliberate steps to walk back into her authentic Self. First,

there was the painful recognition of how influential her conservative community had been and how restrictive of her particular values system, effervescent personality, style of manner and dress. Next—possibly a personal concern—the impact her decision-making could have on her husband personally, towards them both from within his family of origin, and from his lifelong community. Finally, how much would *she* risk? When Jacqueline accepted her first voice student, one can imagine the inner conflicts. One can imagine, now approaching her 50th year, her concerns over a possible further loss to her self-esteem and self-concept should she prove unsuccessful as a voice teacher. Jacqueline *had* been invited to teach years before. At that time, she had seen herself as “a singer,” and “didn’t want to teach.” Now she thought herself too old. Jacqueline was “reticent to become involved.” She had lost confidence “to get out there and share what [she had] learnt, to give [her]self credit.” Jacqueline also lacked the energy, and reflecting back, thought perhaps “hormones ha[d] a great deal to do with it.” Within her community, too, there were “pressures and expectations,” now her children had grown, to “retire” into it. Fortunately, her friend, a professional musician, ignored her diffidence, and sent her the first voice student.

But Jacqueline knew her Essence of Self, her identity. She saw herself as a professional singer because she had in her youth “made her living, a good living” as a singer. I believe it was this continued focus throughout her life from older adolescence and young adulthood onwards that became instrumental in her taking that first voice student—when, at that point in her life history, Jacqueline’s personal economic outlook, and hence future independence, became somewhat shaky. The economic downturn at that time meant “the farm wasn’t doing well,” and her “husband had really cut back on the household money.” One wonders whether she discerned having to continue requesting funds; whether if visualizing herself growing older she saw an impoverishment, first economically, then the spread effect into her inner emotionally and culturally aesthetic lifeworld. Did she possibly visualize her personal lifeworld deprived of its life force and spiritual source—her music, via her voice, and its artistic components? As she said, “I thought, well, if I want to do something with this [her circumstances] I’ve got to do it on my own.” She began to teach voice.

If Jacqueline's first catalyst experience was the outcome of her voice training prior to marriage, a professional and business success, her second catalyst experience was the preparation of her portfolio at approximately 50 years of age, in which she undertook a professional and business life review. In so doing, quite possibly Jacqueline relived the excitement of various musical experiences in her mind's eye. She may have noticed the patterns of how she had used her voice. In preparing her portfolio, noting the diversification and richness of her experiences, the time-frame of this personal loss, she was literally reconstructing her psychic energy towards her then unforeseen future. However, she could only do this once she had the confidence and enjoyment of teaching her first two students. Then she could retrieve and use that earlier adolescent ability to take a *personal* calculated risk. This time, initial non-acceptance by two key colleges did not shut her down as failing the opera audition had. Jacqueline simply continued teaching in her home studio.

The Significance of Mentoring and Modelling

According to an American psychologist, Levinson (1978), 5 years seems to be the time-frame for change of any magnitude. It appears so in Jacqueline's case. She resumed her voice lessons when she was 39 years old. Within her personal safety zone, Jacqueline quietly focused herself, taking small steps at first to retrieve her primary identity. The question now became *how* she could use her singing voice, the foundation stone of her self-concept.

Jacqueline had, and has, a remarkable network of friends, acquaintances, and knowledgeable professional persons. Mentors, noting an individual's aesthetic, spiritual, sociocultural, and intellectual potential, give support, guidance, and enable opportunities. Three mentors were crucial to Jacqueline's incremental successes. In her late adolescence, the professorial head of a Music Conservatory provided this support, encouragement and a job opportunity for Jacqueline to complete her ARCT on a part-time basis.

In her 39th year, one of Jacqueline's professional musician friends insisted she use her talent independently as well as inter-dependently with her family. By introducing Jacqueline to a

voice coach, she challenged Jacqueline's courage, resiliency and determination to resume her singing. In addition, this mentor insisted that Jacqueline stop smoking (her psychological messenger that her singing career was *fini*), and shared in breaking this addictive habit, which strengthened Jacqueline's resolve and correspondingly heightened her self-esteem and self-worth. Finally, recommending Jacqueline as a possible voice teacher, this mentor was actively instrumental in Jacqueline's present heightening reputation. By that time (mid-40s), Jacqueline had retrieved her Essence of Self (her essential self) sufficiently to rise to the challenge.

In her early 40s, Jacqueline met and worked briefly with her third mentor, a visiting European voice maestro, an experience that has had lasting influence. His internationally recognized superior musicianship together with her recognition that she could not only understand but apply his technique rekindled her confidence in her abilities and revitalized her spirit. Jacqueline became progressively aware of the extent of her musical knowledge and experiences, so much so, that she later visited him in Europe for additional coaching. One can imagine the somewhat audacious step of travelling to Germany to take these lessons, her husband only joining her later. (Jacqueline invited her husband's participation and they both returned a second time). Her experience with this European voice coach renewed her confidence and awareness of her musical knowledge. That realized, she had once more to regain confidence that socially this musical knowledge would be recognized. At first, it was not. But this time she was not deterred. An initial first step was gaining momentum.

Redefining Identity: Some Refocusing Issues

Jacqueline challenged conformist, traditional patterns of behavior—inter- and intra-psychological and sociocultural modes of thinking and acting. In 1977 when she realized she was "giving up" psychologically and aesthetically, she unconsciously began the process, her lifeworld journey into an unknown landscape. She took her first step back into her future by focusing on her children's musical talents. Ten years later, in 1988, in her 50th year, after

several years of voice coaching, continual support and encouragement from her mentor/friend, and experiencing success and a sense of accomplishment in her voice-teaching capabilities, Jacqueline understood, and within herself acknowledged her unhappiness, her depression, and her loss. Visualizing a future continuing in the conforming pattern, Jacqueline instead chose her present lifestyle. She now viewed problems as temporary setbacks and an obstacle as a challenge. She would not be closed in and shut down. Her decision necessitated she retrieve her confidence in her Essence of Self, her artistic temperament—her personality. It required a quietitude of independent will, incorporating herself in the commonweal.

Losses. There was no indication of regret over her decision to decline the invitation to be one of two singers on the Ed Sullivan show in Toronto because her future husband was arriving that same evening. While possibly experiencing momentary disappointment for what might have been, given the circumstances, Jacqueline experienced no loss—either then or following. However, despite retrospectively, as one of a couple, accepting part responsibility for being “wimps,” I sensed Jacqueline’s relationship loss in a husband’s inadvertantly neglecting to attend to her voice—her personal wellbeing—as much as to her mother-in-law’s. Admittedly, her husband’s mother had long relied on her son. A widow, he was her eldest son. Raised on the family farm, he had returned to resume his father’s role—anticipated, accepted and honorable. However, one can understand Jacqueline’s feeling of vulnerability, confusion and hurt concerning her ensuing position as a wife.

In traditional households, a wife concentrates her energies on a husband’s and children’s needs while dwelling on the periphery. At the time Jacqueline married, traditional family values were the norm, equality more the exception. Based on her home life experiences, self included family—self incorporated children and spouse, one accepted the romanticized marital relationship and therefore one assumed there was reciprocity.

Reciprocity and the ethic of self-care. Jacqueline acknowledged her feelings—“rage,

blame, and anger"—including her surrounds in what led to her eventual loss of courage, diffidence, seeking confirmation for her decisions, withdrawal and generalized voicelessness. Once acknowledged, she undertook the soul-searching task of reweaving the damaged sections of her life. Her confusion diminished to the degree her focus returned. It took 5 years to recognize her losses, how she had participated, who were involved, and what needed to be done. This was taking place surreptitiously within her psyche as she chauffeured her children to functions and herself to a lesson or some singing engagement with her husband.

It was during the second half of her 40s, during the second 5-year segment, that Jacqueline set her new path, which she took, ending an era of her life, her economic independence acting as a facilitator. Her "realization of two worlds" must have been frightening and exhilarating in what was now focused upon—her Essence of Self, her voice. Her risking in adolescence and ultimate success at that time possibly reinforced her present moment. She knew she was strong. Now her lifespan was at the "adolescent" period of the second stage of her life—who would she become in the second half of her life? Possibly she realized a successful calculated risk could be repeated. She risked again. At first, as with her family of origin, her husband and perhaps his family were initially confused, but as with the principal of the Conservatory, she had a mentor in her professional musician/friend. One does not evolve in isolation. One cannot construct one's self, alone; no one person is self-made. Some one person or segment of society must in turn invite one to participate, encouraging and acknowledging one's new directions, as Erikson (1968) emphasized as essential for an adolescent to achieve positive identity formation.

At the age of approximately 54 years, travelling homewards one late afternoon, Jacqueline realized that she was "happy for the first time in a long time," that now she could see her future, "this could last forever, teaching singing or having the ear to encourage young people." I believe that at this euphoric moment, Jacqueline's aesthetic (her intuitive) and intellectual (her logical) strengths merged. The outcome has been a thriving, blossoming

decade of growing accomplishments. Socioculturally, she is no longer in her husband's and children's shadows. She is standing tall, alongside. Her family shares in her happiness. Her husband is now admiring her and with Jacqueline's encouragement and resourcefulness is refocusing his musical resources and energies, while her grown children are enthusiastic and applaud the outcome.

Using the Stepping Stones

What was Jacqueline's process of self-care? Within the process, Jacqueline could not observe herself, her evolving lifeworld, nor the retrieval of that adolescent confidence in her voice and in her abilities. She had used initiative in her adolescence when applying to the Conservatory. She used her intuitive component unconsciously in focusing on her children's musical development, and by keeping in touch through participation, together with her husband, in various venues. She recognized the imposed limitations gradually. First, the dormant joy in stage appearances was reawakened when she returned to the opera stage 15 years after arrival on the Prairies. Next, a professional musician took her under her wing and insisted she use her talents. Now, for a time, her initiative was once more focused upon herself. By accepting the challenge to teach, she used her singing experiences differently, drawing on both her theoretical and practical experiences. Applying for teaching positions in appropriate colleges acknowledged this new focus. *Finding the new avenue to use her voice towards others' development was the challenge Jacqueline unfolded.*

A challenge: the role of her family support system. Jacqueline's adolescent/young adult strengths were her reserve. She had known her own mind then. Once married, her children received this attention, this focused vision until launched in adulthood. Since her return to her professional career, her business, she has progressively encouraged and involved her husband. His requesting her critique of his voice technique indicates his respect and high regard for her musical contribution. Jacqueline's expectation and request for payment can be viewed as personal acknowledgement of her self-worth and her contribution to his worth, a measure of her newly found and grounded success. Understandably, her aspirations may

have been puzzling for her mother-in-law, a woman who had remained within a traditional and hierarchical farm community all her life.

A challenge: her initiative and the economic imperative. Since 1989, Jacqueline is realizing economic independence in a thriving business sense by setting up her studios and taking a stand on teaching in a College setting. Now, sufficiently economically independent, Jacqueline also visits her elderly mother monthly, thus reestablishing her roots, regaining her perspective within her home environment where she has been known all her life. In repositioning herself economically, Jacqueline rediscovered and redefined her personal and professional self, enlarged her options, strengthened (and is continuing to strengthen) her family ties, and regained her energy.

Towards the Commonweal: Generativity and Ego Integrity

In some environments, marriage as a profession requires a wife to first accommodate and compartmentalise her youth and her resources towards the empowerment of her husband and children. Once those lives are secure, some women then reconstruct their former life path according to their present needs for personal empowerment. Jacqueline chose this route. At 50 years of age, her children economically, socially, and academically thriving, she redefined her identity, and is currently expanding her horizons and pathfinding opportunities for others' families. She envisions the possibility of providing opportunities for persons in the northern areas of her Province, and is currently widening her circles of influence into these. She would like further involvement in her former environment and is reconnecting with former colleagues.

Her professional stature is growing as an increasing number of her students continue to win the larger voice scholarships. Yet she views competitions from a perspective of experience and confidence building, similar to voice-master classes. "Competitions are *not* about winning," as she said, "one learns from both the positive *and* negative experiences." She has reinforced this attitude by taking voice-coaching lessons herself and sharing her strengths

and weaknesses in her use of technique with her students. She is encouraged by the appreciation, admiration and respect of fellow colleagues. Actively involved in a professional organization, she is developing a wider radius of connections. Simultaneously, during her monthly sojourn to her home city, Jacqueline is strengthening lifelong friendships and musical connections. As an observer, I see Jacqueline drawing out the excellence within herself, competing with herself rather than competing or undermining a colleague, and in so doing, self-actualizing.

The circle of time. Jacqueline has come full circle. In adolescence she was encouraged to seize opportunities, to explore avenues. She now encourages her students to do the same. As she encapsulated, "We are going to open it up for other young people because we're showing the way." Her family responsibilities taken care of in the main, she has chosen to look at the sociocultural context, to risk exposure, and, still in process, continues to enlarge her circles of influence, turning her energies, experience, knowledge, and life wisdom towards the development of others' families—children, adolescents and adults. The generativity displayed by adults during her adolescence in assisting and encouraging the development and use of her singing talent Jacqueline is now, in turn, modelling.

Synopsis: Towards her Future

Jacqueline lived in hope toward fulfilment of a dream when at 18 years of age she began as a part-time student in ARCT.¹ She added three essential ingredients to that hope, a calculated risk, courage, and tenacity. She lived hope and retrieved her dream, somewhat differently, but enlarged, when during her late 30s she resumed her singing lessons and recognized her capabilities when observing the European voice coach. She experienced gratitude towards significant figures in her life journey and its process—towards the somewhat intimidating professor-head of the Toronto Conservatory who saw her potential and set wheels in motion; towards her professional musician friend, also challenging her fears, requiring that she undertake difficult tasks trusting a successful outcome; and she risked accepting a College position, initially defying her husband to do so, as, at first, he "didn't want [her] to go."

These were all major steps in a process that held no guarantees of a successful outcome. The various components that gradually distanced Jacqueline away from her Essence of Self, her *raison d'être*, were one by one recognized, stared down, and overcome. Jacqueline appears to have retrieved her voice, her focus for the next segment of her life journey. This strength of character she encapsulated when she reminded me that "one can *not* but sing if that is a part of one's self." Respect for herself continues in respect towards others. For a time she was confused, suffering a temporary loss of self when she adopted and adapted to the traditional role and duties of wife and mother, which may discriminate against a woman as a Self. She has now incorporated that generosity of spirit and ethic of caring towards that Self.

Jacqueline fills her own cup. She still views meeting her future husband rather than appearing on an Ed Sullivan show as the right decision, shown as she recalled the memory by voice inflection and energy, and in her laughter. But one did sense a regret over declining to teach singing when first approached. Typically, Jacqueline shares this regret with her voice students, as she selects her life experiences to assist in a student's focusing his/her aspirations and consequent decision-making. This is both generativity, mentoring, and the wisdom of a firmly-established ego integrity. Her calculated risk taking, resiliency and courage have effectively erased her earlier potential despair.

Cultural building blocks. Her experiences are now building others' life experiences. She is assisting in viewing cultural expectancies and inhibitions from within a different frame—from her life-frame reference points. Unshaken from her belief and values system that singing is both her profession and her business, for Jacqueline, "attitude" means "a part of one's strength creeps into other parts of one's life." She appears to have retrieved that core component, that essential part of her Self, her Essence of Being, the source of her psychic energy. By so doing, showing resiliency, courage, sensitivity, and strength of character, Jacqueline has retrieved her identity. Ego integrity has replaced her former ego despair. It includes others. As she encapsulates, "We're ahead of the baby boom. We have

all that experience."

What a person is trying to do persistently, recurrently, as a function of his own internal nature, is often surprisingly well-focused and well-patterned. Whether these leading motives are called desires, interests, values, traits, or sentiments does not really matter. (Allport, 1956, p. 41)

In her own words, "Now I know where I'm going."

EMILY

I grew up on a farm as an only child. When I had finished primary school, my parents sent me to a boarding school. I found being away from home quite traumatic. I was there for the Fourth and Fifth Forms. When I was between 14 and 15 years of age, the girl sharing my room died of peritonitis. I guess that was my first real trauma. It left me feeling quite fearful. I stayed until I had finished my School Certificate examination and my parents thought, and were particularly keen, that I should continue into the Sixth Form. But because of my trauma, they decided to let me return home and take correspondence, which wasn't really very satisfactory.

I had the idea I wanted to be a school teacher, although that was secondary to being a wife and mother. That was what I really wanted to do in my heart of hearts. I wasn't any different from many young women who thought after they left school they would work for a little while and then get married and have a family. So I didn't have strong convictions or any strong ambitions.

When I finished my correspondence year, I was too young to begin at Training College so the decision was made that I would pursue my music. I studied for my ATCL Diploma and began teaching piano at home. That Diploma involved three papers: the principles of teaching, harmony, and the practical component. In 1957, I decided I wanted to continue and began my LRSM. That was when I moved to the city, working while I took lessons. I met my husband while there, and married when I was 22 years old. I missed my practical exam the first time as my teacher went overseas and handed me on to one of her students. I resumed my lessons with that teacher when she returned and sat the exam again. This time I passed. I had been married about two years by then and was teaching a few pupils at home.

When our first child was born I stopped teaching. I felt fulfilled in my role as wife and mother, very much the domesticated lady, very low key, playing the piano only for myself. It was only after we moved to another city, after two more children were born that I realized not only did I miss having piano students, but I also thought a little extra income would be

helpful. I was about 30 years old by that time.

Looking back, I don't think I particularly enjoyed motherhood at the beginning as it was not quite as I had envisaged. It was much more responsible and I was quite a nervous mother until our third child was born. As they say, I enjoyed having children when it was time to stop.

I realized as the family grew that of course you can't live life through your children—and I don't think I expected to. You realize that if you're going to extend or broaden your horizons a little, you've got to make the effort to find your strengths and use them. I guess when the children were school age and a number of people found I could play the piano, I was asked whether I'd play for school productions and the Festivals. At this same time I began gathering more pupils at home and accompanying musical productions and choirs and playing for performances. It developed from there. The children liked seeing me involved and it got me mixing with more people too, which was good. I've always enjoyed people, I've always been a keen observer of human nature, what makes them the way they are, why they do the things they do.

My life went along quite smoothly until our eldest was 8 years old when she had to have a serious major operation. What shapes your life to a large degree are the events that happen and I guess when we had the first inkling of our child's disability—what proved to be a disability—it was a very traumatic time in our lives. I looked very much to my husband at that time for my strength and stability and I didn't allow him to have the same feelings as I had because I wanted him to be strong for me. I didn't know how to deal with disability at that point. But I think that was a trigger point to my wanting to be more, to learn more. I don't think at that stage that I grew a lot, but I learnt how vulnerable I was at that point. I think more than anything, I learnt that when you become a parent you become very vulnerable. I think the survival of your children is perhaps more important than your own in a way. Yes.

Well, the operation was successful and life went along smoothly for quite a number of years. Then I faced the most critical time in my life. I was in my mid- to late 40s when my husband's department was downsized and he was unexpectedly terminated. He experienced a very reactive depression. I realized at that time that whatever resources I had were going to be needed for me, for him, and for the family. That really was the time of real, real growth. I found at that time within myself a strength I could draw on.

His depression lasted about 1-1/2 years. It was a slow process. I didn't know anyone personally who had experienced this, although we had a lot of people praying for us. Let me say that through the Grace of God he slowly came through. My parents, while anxious for me, couldn't understand at all! Our children were a little afraid. They weren't used to seeing their dad like this. I mean, people view depression sometimes as just having a bad day. It's totally different altogether!

I think my husband relied on me very heavily for a long time. In fact, I often say that I felt closer to him at that point than perhaps I'd ever felt before. He opened up to me and told me things he would never have told to anybody else. I guess he was perhaps at that point where he was trying to understand as well. Initially he was negative all the time, but gradually that lessened. I didn't go to pieces as I perhaps might have earlier. I had been very sheltered and maybe overprotected as a child as I always had parents to lean on, to watch out for me. But I found that taking it one day at a time, prayerfully, noticing each small success that I had come to terms with, I gradually learnt to cope. Learning to find the triggers and ways of dealing with them helped as well. I certainly wasn't the same person afterwards that I was before. When I'd had my traumatic experience at school I'd coped but not successfully I don't think. But I think everything builds on everything else. It's been a whole growing process really. We've had another crisis with our elder daughter since, and I felt much more able to deal with that.

When my husband became so depressed, I didn't talk to my doctor or any professional. I read a lot. A book that helped me enormously was a book by Dr. Clare Wiek. I began exploring for the first time the complexities of what makes a person, what basically shapes us and makes us what we are. Obviously when you start to read more and talk to people you realize you are not alone. You do learn a lot through talking with other people and reading. I gained a much wider perception. I became more confident and became aware that we do have resources which I guess alters your whole perspective on life sometimes too. They say that the word "crisis" means danger and opportunity and that you either go one way or the other. I guess I actually took the opportunity to learn from that. I learnt the only person you can change is yourself. You can't change anybody else. I guess you can discuss and talk about things but I think so much depends on peoples' own attitudes to life generally, on how they perceive things. We don't see things always in the same way do we, for good, or ill.

While my husband was at his worst, I saw a magazine advertisement asking for volunteers to begin a phone-in crisis line counselling service. A group of people from various churches had this dream that they wanted to make a difference with families in our city. They published a magazine and distributed it free to every home in our city. The magazine is not overtly Christian although the values are Christian values. When the worst was over, I went to one of their seminars and became involved. We had to take a minimum of three counselling courses before we were qualified to go on the phones. We took these at the Christian Care Centre at a Medical Centre in our city. Our instructors were psychologists and we looked at medical, legal and psychological issues. The people I met were very interesting. Most of them hadn't done anything like this before either. I began telephone counselling one day a week. There were seminars, regular meetings with the counsellors on particular issues, and recommended readings on particular topics. I've learnt a lot. I mean, a lot of social issues—the complexities of relationships, such as bringing up children, abortion, homosexuality, all the areas of abuse. Actually, I've been doing it for 10 years now. When our supervisor (whom I highly regard) retires, this phone-in service will probably discontinue as we are not getting as many calls now as we used to. Some of the

volunteers are continuing courses towards becoming counsellors, but I think I have decided that I won't become more involved in counselling. I don't think it's my skill and I don't see my chief interest lying in an exclusive one-to-one role.

Apart from Grapevine seminars I also went to a few music-teaching master classes. My attitude to piano teaching has changed quite a lot over the years, too. I was very much a perfectionist. Now I realize that I want my students also to develop a lifelong love and desire for music. I'm a much more enthusiastic teacher than I used to be because I realize that enthusiasm is one of the most wonderful gifts. The fact that a number of my students keep coming back has always been a great source of delight to me. I don't have quite as many students now as I used to because our neighbourhood has changed. There aren't so many young children now. But I do teach adults as well. I think my two loves are children and music and being able to combine the two has been great.

I have always been a keen tennis player and I still play tennis. I thoroughly enjoy that part of my life because I am mixing with another group of people again. It's just pure fun and relaxation.

I think when I leave Grapevine I will probably do something very down to earth. There are so many organizations in this city who need volunteers. I feel I want to do more hands on actually, not so much cerebral, much more practical I think at this point, yes. At the moment I am playing at a Rest Home once a week; I'm interested in doing things with the older folk. They love it and keep saying, "Don't forget to come back next Monday." It's only for an hour but I really enjoy it. I must say music has taken my life into all sorts of little places like that. It's very enjoyable. I enjoy my role as a grandmother, too, I must say. That's very satisfying. I'd like to do some volunteer activity with my husband too because he's sort of looking for something now. It would be nice to share something. I accompany him occasionally when he plays the violin. We both enjoy that.

As I said, I'm not a person with strong drives and ambitions. Sometimes I wish I were. Some people life happens to, and other people make life happen. I think I'm more of the one that life has happened to rather than making it happen. So when I look at my future I come a little bit unstuck. I know my mind has been stretched. I don't always believe everything I've been told. I've always had a very enquiring mind and I always appreciate people who can stretch it for me. I found Scott Peck's *People of the Lie* did that. It opened up a whole new perspective. I think a lot. Actually, I am more a thinker than a talker. Perhaps that's because I was an only child. Only children seem to be more self-contained, happy in their own company. But I also love company. I've got lots of acquaintances and a lot of friends. If I had a problem or a real crisis, I could probably now choose among a half-a-dozen friends I would feel totally comfortable with—I suppose that would have to be the deepest level of friendship.

I remember a dear old lady across the road I loved to visit when she was alive. She was so

wise. She personified for me what life was all about. I admire a lot of people but I haven't one particular mentor. I reflect on the attitudes of various people. The supervisor at Grapevine has influenced me quite a lot. She's a very down-to-earth, basic, likeable person who has helped me stretch my mind.

As dearly as I wanted to be a mother, I still believe that that's been perhaps my most fulfilling role. I'm not a world shaker. I enjoy life. I'm inclined to live life for the moment. I enjoy the little things. I love nature and, yes, I think I was born to enjoy life. But I'm thankful perhaps for the things that have come along and haven't been enjoyable because I think my life would have been much less than it is. And although you wouldn't want to ever choose the things that sometimes happen to you, we see that it was a good thing that it did happen. And I'm a strong believer. I mean, I guess all through this "walk," there has been the spiritual component. When I was a little girl, I always felt God was writing every little thing that Emily did wrong in His little book. But my spiritualness has broadened enormously over the years as well. It was very buried for a while. I'm firmly convinced God works in all circumstances. He doesn't cause them, He allows them and works in them. The spiritual part of me has been the absolute rock all along the line really. I mean, my experience of God over the years has changed, and my awareness, with what has happened.

I like to be involved, I really do. Mixing with people gives me a great deal of satisfaction, but I haven't any specific goals apart from getting more involved in volunteer things. I did once do a stint for Meals on Wheels but I don't want to do that now because of the traffic. I just look forward to what life unfolds in the future and I hope and I always pray, and I pray often, that God will give me eyes to see the opportunities and that giving me the eyes I won't be slow to catch on to what and where His direction might lead.

We must learn to care for our own loneliness and suffering and the loneliness and suffering of others, for within pain and isolation and loneliness one can find courage and hope and what is brave and lovely and true in life. Serving loneliness is a way to self-identity and love, and faith in the wonder of living. (Moustakas, 1961, p. 103)

Overview

Perhaps Emily's mainstay through the difficult life passages she has confronted is her intuitive approach to situations, her willingness to act courageously, seeking understanding and knowledge including the more esoteric areas (as, for example, Scott Peck's book), together with stepping into the abyss of the unknown (that eventuates after the crisis period has passed in accessing Grapevine, Doing as well as Being). She has actively engaged the

intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual and physical components of her Self. In so doing, she has enlarged her circle of potential support persons, enabling her ability to view from a number of perspectives. Correspondingly, her spiritual component appears to have become the foundation; she has moved beyond being the more passive recipient of religious truths toward a critical reflection and personal selection of her moral and ethical values and attitudes.

Rather than *personal* disintegration towards reintegration, Emily's difficult life passages (her traumatic experiences or trigger points as she calls them), have been proactive involvement—even when relying on her husband during her second traumatic crisis, their daughter's serious illness and major operation. Her third trauma, her encounter with *anomie*—her husband's role confusion, temporary disintegration and loss of meaning—elicited an altruistic response. Emily chose the growth pathway, and in so doing discovered her additional hidden resources and strengths of character. She quietly asserted herself, drawing on a previously relatively untapped resource, her intellectual component. It appears that before her husband's crisis, Emily had primarily concentrated on her music and family activities; her intellectual potential had remained relatively untapped. Emily's spiritual beliefs, it seems, were balanced more toward the traditional religious constructs, she being relatively passive in that process. As she said, "My spiritualness has broadened enormously over the years as well. It was very buried for a while."

I first met Emily in 1961 when we were both in our early 20s and each newly married. At that time she was teaching students piano. We visited each others' homes occasionally and saw each other briefly at church services until her husband took a position in another city approximately 3 years later. From that time on, contact was via a Christmas card or letter until 1979 and 1989 when our family stayed briefly with them en route to Australia. Since returning to Australia for an extended stay in 1991-1992, when I visited again, we have generally briefly reconnected each time I return home.

Letters, casual conversations, and visits are primarily social occurrences. Not having lived in close proximity all these years, our infrequent visits involving family members present, I was unaware of Emily's involvement in Grapevine, of the traumatic trigger point that had initiated this interest. The interview, her brief comments when reviewing the transcription, and a later note on new directions undertaken offered glimpses of Emily.

Emily's traumatic moments do not appear to have directly threatened her personal self-concept or her self-esteem. Nor does she appear to have been personally confronted at any time with a shrinking or closing of her social spaces, a blocking of her aspirations, or age discrimination. Nor have the values she practises as a wife and mother even momentarily been threatened by observers, causing a temporary loss of role identity. Rather, she *chose* to become involved proactively in her *husband's* crisis of personal value and search for meaning, using her initiative, focus and discernment—in short, she chose to live her credo of unconditional positive regard and unconditional love.

Can one assume that the extent of Emily's exploratory readings must have at times caused an anxiety over her identity, in that it required some re-formation on her part? She could no longer take the subordinate role. She now needed to become the superordinate for a time. And that was, in the main, outside her realm of experience, that of her parents, community, or the social and religious culture she had internalised and *knew*. As Erikson (1974) wrote, "one is apt to forget that identity formation, while being 'critical' in youth, is really a generational issue" (p. 28). Socioculturally, these were the early stages of globalisation, corporations and deficit reduction, impacting job security and possibilities especially for the youth and the middle-life adult. In this instance, a husband was suffering an identity crisis and his wife was redefining hers. Their adolescent and young adult children were viewing from the perspective of *their* youth. Emily extended her nurturant skills.

From all appearances, throughout her life—both at home and in community—Emily has experienced unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1970). From this position of strength,

she faced her husband's crisis and possibly threats to the family's economic security. By year end she had achieved a personal growth level not previously experienced by her as her knowledge, affective understanding, and sociocultural involvement furthered her self-actualization (Maslow, 1954).

Emily's "goal of unconditional love tempered with wisdom [her] constant prayer and goal" personalises her life history. She chose motherhood and family as her profession, and is primarily a caring, nurturant person. Her personality appears to be focused towards enhancing others' joys, potentialities, and possibilities. Consequently, she has been willing to take the initiative and step out into new territory. The result is as Moustakas has written: "Every act of helping another to fulfill his unique opportunities is at the same time an actualization of one's own capacity for self-growth" (1967, p. 137).

Here is a person who has been courageous enough on coming to a fork in her life road to turn onto the pathway of inner journeying and self-knowledge. She did this through reading, introductory psychology courses prior to volunteering at Grapevine, critical reflection and social application. Perhaps what most aptly describes this process for Emily is the Socratic "Know Thyself." Emily, to my mind, is endeavouring to live not as a player on her life stage, playing various roles, wearing different costumes and personality masks, but to live the primary Christian credo, "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

Anomie: Traumas and Triggers

Emily's first traumatic experience, as she said, was at 14 years of age when her boarding-school roommate died. One can assume, given that close association, that they had become friends. Emily must have been grief-stricken, devastated, anxious, helpless, questioning, perhaps even frightened. But she learned she was understood; she was not alone. Her parents and her school community supported her. She had an anchor. It can be argued that her parents' reaction on this occasion set the groundwork for Emily's later ability to accept a similar challenge in her husband's crisis, his temporary perceived loss of self and dignity.

It is conceivable that initially *both* felt devastated and helpless.

It is evident her parents affirmed her concern, recognising her wanting to leave the boarding school following this traumatic experience at such a vulnerable age. But they did not withdraw her immediately. Perhaps they felt Emily needed the familiar surroundings of her school peers, her teachers, and classroom participation, rather than the relative isolation of returning home and taking correspondence lessons. So Emily remained, completing her compulsory education within that setting, and, in so doing, Emily learned (correspondingly modelled by her parents, school, and possibly her peers) responsibility, dependability, fortitude, courage and perseverance. Her parents were also sensitive to *her* needs. She had fulfilled their requirements. They would honour hers. They listened to her youthful adolescent request to return home and take correspondence lessons the following year, even though (as they might have feared), it would be more difficult and wouldn't go as well—which it didn't, as she said.

Her second major trauma occurred when Emily was in her early 30s. Their eldest daughter had her first major operation. This time Emily realised “more than anything, that when you become a parent you become very vulnerable.” Perhaps she understood what her parents earlier must have experienced when faced with *their* daughter's pain; that no matter how much support they gave her, it was Emily's direct experience. Now Emily could in turn support her daughter, but it was her daughter's experience—*alone*.

Emily leaned on her husband, much later realising she “didn't allow him” to in turn lean on her in order to share his vulnerability, his fear. Possibly she did so quite legitimately, given the sociocultural and socioreligious ethics, anticipations and expectations of the late 1960s and early 1970s—and still in some circles. At that time, a husband was not to display women's culturally constructed and culturally perceived emotional weakness. They were to be strong. Spousal roles, values and attitudes were still primarily quite traditional. But, as she said, with the recognition through *this* experience of her protectiveness for her children,

also came the recognition that she wanted to "be more, to learn more."

This experience, it seems, intrinsically motivated Emily to adopt a more critically reflective, introspective and inclusive involvement with life. To what *degree* her realization became praxis is an unknown. It did, though, enable a successful outcome when Emily confronted her third traumatic experience, this time one in which she experienced anomie, and their children, some anxiety. *In her late 40s, Emily faced a crisis of abject helplessness and role reversal. For the first time in her life, she perceived herself as alone in a situation totally outside the realm of her experience.* It was not her social isolation or devastating illness, but her husband's temporary disintegration, when unanticipated and unexpectedly labelled redundant, he lost not only his role identity momentarily but, for him, his family's ongoing economic base. Emily's husband, her alter ego, support, and mainstay experienced a sociostructurally induced economic crisis. Nor could her parents, as she said, while supportive and concerned for their daughter's wellbeing, understand, it being outside the realm of *their* personal experience as well.

Personal Involvement

Assessing the loss. While the devastating experience was her husband's, Emily, through actively participating, experienced his chaos vicariously. She used *her* anomie as a creative force, engaging first her intuition, then intellect, her spiritual component, and later her aesthetic contribution in further community involvement.

A crisis confronted. When her husband experienced his loss of identity in early middle adulthood, the suddenness and unexpectedness of a redundancy label replacing his former job title, to my mind as a couple they faced two alternatives. Each could become involved in the problem and solution, the one less directly involved sharing the emotional confusion and devastation in self-esteem and self-concept, while both sought assistance and support from knowledgeable, compassionate outsiders. This reaction towards action would presumably encourage further intimacy and mutuality as each recognized the

interdependence and independence of respectful relationship. Or, in this particular instance, Emily could have isolated herself, choosing avoidance and distancing from her husband's crisis, unable to cope with his vulnerabilities. Emily chose the former, the more traumatic and difficult one of engagement and involvement, where hope, trust, initiative, and industry would propel them through this relationship rite of passage (Erikson, 1963). By so doing, she brought their relationship to an I/Thou level from that of their daughter's earlier crisis when she had relied on her husband's strength. Each experienced developmental change; ultimately, all family members were involved to varying degrees.

A crisis overcome. Despite, perhaps, mutual confusion, fear, anxiety, and presumably impatience at times, Emily, her husband, and family, ultimately grew towards compassionate understanding of what it means to become a fully-functioning, compassionate person (Rogers, 1970). Emily felt closer to her husband than ever before during that worst year of their lives, recognising the value in becoming the confidante of a person when totally vulnerable in confusion and pain. She was mature enough and psychologically stable enough to accept his vulnerability, to seek knowledge, and to be supportive. Theirs became a *shared* process, a shared gift of hope and enlargement of spirit and trust, hope and faith. She realised what not all people do, that when someone speaks openly about inner fears and confusions, he/she is largely hearing him-/herself upon reflection (Rogers, 1970). It is my belief that both she and her husband were learning and growing through each others' respective losses brought on by his devastating termination of employment.

How did Emily take charge and practice a value she prizes, that of unconditional love? Probably one can assume she listened non-judgmentally as her husband acknowledged (and risked sharing) his vulnerability, confusion, isolation, and socioeconomic rejection. She shared these losses and miniature deaths of a self, recognising and acknowledging the imperativeness of her now taking the helm and leading them through this passage. She primarily acted as confidante and encourager. At the same time, their adolescent and young-adult children matured if only through observation of the process, and ultimately successful

outcome, of this critical socially constructed life passage. It appears that all grew in self-knowledge and awareness as each, to varying degrees, participated in one family member's crisis. Emily acted with Rogers' unconditional positive regard, affectivity, genuine concern and receptivity as she responded to her husband's traumatic experience and understandable reaction. She drew upon the following strengths:

Leadership skills. Reading between the lines, hearing the spaces between words, the sadness in her voice as she recalled that marital period, one can imagine the pain, loneliness, and suffering she at times experienced during that year of loss. For her husband's and her family's sake, Emily shared her husband's devastation. Simultaneously, she sought knowledge from a hitherto untapped resource, the Christian Care Centre at a Medical Centre, taking three courses from psychologists with the intention of becoming a volunteer for a newly-formed phone-in distress line. Each, in process, strengthened as each moved beyond a choice of self-protectiveness, avoidance, insularity and narcissism that Erikson terms stagnation, and towards the generativity of growth by sensemaking and turning a loss towards compassionate self-understanding and community caring and concern. Significantly, once her husband had successfully overcome his crisis, he, in turn, assisted fellow males facing the same loss. Emily strengthened cognitively, affectively, and spiritually, and the couple grew sufficiently for both later to *share* their third crisis, their elder daughter's unanticipated and, unfortunately, unsuccessful second operation.

Risk. Within her family, social, and spiritual circle, she is a quiet risk taker. There is grief, isolation, loneliness, anxiety, strength and resiliency behind the simplistically sounding choices she has made. Whereas she had, to then, kept a comparatively low profile, primarily in the traditional role of wife and mother, now she extended her nurturing skills into the community. Simultaneously, she acquired a broader knowledge and understanding of personalities and the challenges, mini-tragedies and tragedies that individuals may confront. Emily's becoming more independently self-sufficient as well as more self-aware in affect, cognition, and her spiritual wellbeing, appears to have resulted in a couple who were being

more open to the self and toward each other, therefore each enlarging his/her sociocultural awareness. As can be observed in the outcome of their daughter's later operation and resulting disability, both have evolved in their ability to overcome the tragedies life may hold.

Resiliency. Her parents couldn't assist when her husband experienced his depression as they had done when at 14 she experienced her roommate's death. Now, perhaps for the first time in her life—this her late 40s—Emily must have felt almost totally alone with no safety net except *her* faith, *her* values, and *her* belief in herself. She pulled up her unused strengths, her unique personality's contribution. As she said, "I found something within me that I could draw on." It is my opinion that Emily drew on her internalised ongoing validation from parents, family, acquaintances and friends to that point. The security, understanding, and regard given her to this crisis point she now shared with her husband. Significantly, her husband did not reject her concern. It takes courage to involve oneself in another's pain. This she did. It shows wisdom to learn from others in interactive involvement. This she did. She furthered her ability to stand in another's mocassins, to walk in another's shoes, which mothers invariably do with their children. Finally, she answered that advertisement, stepping out from a formerly somewhat sheltered lifestyle into the abyss and morass of humanity's sadnesses, conflicts and confusions.

Pathfinder. Emily displayed a willingness to open her mind and heart in this major traumatic experience. She read widely *and* became a team member on an open line, inexperienced for what she would hear, what mentally and emotionally she would be impacted by. Significantly, she moved toward a previously unexplored segment of society—the professional psychologists, advocates and, indirectly, her clients. In so doing, Emily accessed the three exploratory routes essential towards generativity, ego integrity and ultimate wisdom, which are: • constructed knowledge (her conscientizing and praxis); • interpretation in addition to experience; and, • application in community through interaction with a cross-section of a population (See this study, pp. 107-109). Perhaps, too, Emily

released herself (and matured) beyond two psychosocial myths—and the myth of its “Experts”—one being the professionals of religious organizations having the answers in their creeds and dogmas, the other the socioreligious myth that institutionally the male is the head of the home. Instead, she now lived the interconnectedness of relationship, and with it, the reality that each person is responsible for himself/herself, not as self-survival *over* others and nature, but in enhancing others’ possibilities through encouragement, affirmation, and involvement. For, ultimately, I believe each of us is, as Jung termed it, a part of the collective unconscious (1965).

Emily was true to herself. She listened to herself. She took the pathway Jung (1965) and Greenspan (1993) advocate—away from the traditional professional advice-givers, her minister and her doctor, towards her inner lifeworld of experiences and reflections on readings, conversations and observations. By later accessing the more controversial caregivers, the psychologists, she stepped further into the initial abyss of self-discovery. She subsequently became involved in what status-quo thinkers would likely describe as esoteric literature and, as a volunteer, explored unexperienced social heartaches with unknown persons, online, unseen, possibly in one-only calls. To achieve additional spiritual insights may require this process of self-discovery.

The Significance of Community

The role of her day-to-day associations. A reality perception (and ultimate successful or unsuccessful outcome) depends not only on the particular incident, of what happens *to* us, of how *we* react, but on how our *community* context chooses to react toward us. When Emily initially sought answers within her known community, there was confusion. As she said, her husband’s crisis was outside their realm of experiences. Yet, of significant importance, it appears she continued to receive her community’s positive regard, respect and support for her coping skills.

When an individual seeks a group in an endeavour to understand a behavior outside of

his/her frame of reference, it is my opinion that now the generativity or the stagnation of the group as a composite of a number of individuals comes into play. Perhaps Rogers' unconditional positive regard towards another's behavior is Erikson's generativity in action. As one struggles with the unexpected (whether positive or negative) *how* our confusion or joy is interpreted distanciates or enhances one's inner psychic maturity (and covertly, that of the external participants). In Emily's case, she received the prayerful support of parents, friends and family, and support among her large group of acquaintances in her church, music, and tennis circles. At no time does it appear she was isolated. Each step taken seems to have been acknowledged and rewarded with affirmation and encouragement. To thrive, one needs such support. She now has six or so friends she could call on if necessary in a further crisis. Perhaps that is why she has so easily moved beyond Grapevine into a number of different communities, incorporating all age groups from the child to the aged.

Erikson (1963) mentions "societal mores that perceive talents as a part of scarce resources, and of any individual considering that his/hers must come first, the disease of selfishnessness, ethics, capitalism and miserly self-absorption" (p. 3). Emily's story emphasizes among other things that to achieve maturity and wisdom one must be welcomed by one's mini-culture in developing, then using, the unique gifts one has been given. There must be a reciprocal *sharing*.

The role of group support—her therapeutic community. When Emily risked an unknown community context, her anomie was honored. Within this group and its leaders, she experienced respect, regard, and empathy. These persons, as community, assisted her furthering compassionate understanding of the Self together with the recognition of the mutuality of vulnerability. Emily applied what she learnt; she helped herself. This, in turn, ultimately enabled understanding respect toward a phone-in client experiencing emotional, cognitive and psychic/spiritual confusion. Once she had acquired a basic understanding, she then used her new-found skill and empathy to outreach as a para-professional phone-line counsellor on a volunteer basis. Ten years later, as mentioned, Emily is branching even

further, as she coordinates and leads an outreach children's group at her community church, accompanies seniors in their Lodge at a weekly sing-along, and is tutoring a woman in the English language. Thus, engaging in her husband's crisis has resulted in addition to assisting Grapevine for the past 10 years, in a re-identification and enlargement of her sociocultural contribution and a future diversified enhancement of a community.

Personal Growth Through Loss

The intuitive and aesthetic impact. When Emily became a teacher in the aesthetically creative field of music, it appears for both Emily and her parents the decision was mutual. As mentioned, from home-studio music students, then accompanying in schools on a volunteer basis, and her husband in violin/piano recitals, Emily has continued to enlarge her musical contribution, social circles and experiences, presently involving all age levels. These participating activities, together with Master Classes in technique, have influenced her life experiences. In turn, her growth in understanding—by successfully surmounting each personal crisis—has influenced her attitude towards her teaching style. Rather than simply concentrating on technique, Emily now aims at including the "soul," the affect of music, by developing in her students a love and an aesthetic respect for music as art.

In various areas of her life experiences, she appears to analyze a situation then proceed according to an inner process. While professional people seem to be viewed as aids in furthering her understanding of situations to facilitate her decision-making, she accesses multiple resources, thus maintaining a balanced lifestyle. It would seem her aesthetic contributions and feedback have impacted on her as her music appears to have been her mainstay and a large contributor towards her composed sense of self. In fact, Emily has used three resources to alleviate stress, her spiritual resources, her music, and her tennis, thus taking care of her physical and psychic wellbeing. One observes a synergy between Emily's self-concept and those of family, friends and acquaintances.

The Outcome

Growth in relationship. Emily and her husband appear to have forged a friendship while each remains uniquely him/herself. During two major crises in their marriage each supported the other, first a husband his wife, then a role reversal. The outcome of each trusting, sharing, and acting autonomously on behalf of the other, the self, and family members for a respective time, is mutual reciprocity. Given the aesthetic strengths of two people, one involved in piano, the other in violin, perhaps it was this very sensitivity, intensity, and affectivity to nuances that assisted their focusing on creative ways of resolving an anomic experience.

Towards an Essence of Self. Emily, in choosing growth over avoidance, now recognises her strengths and interests and is focused. She *knows* she is not a one-on-one counselling person. She *knows* her first love is children, the elderly, and music. In choosing to confront and grow through challenges she is maturing into her unique Essence of Self. She has shown courage and integrity in taking the opportunity to grow spiritually through widening her knowledge base, through experiences shared and participated in. Because she has not been thwarted or blocked, her growth has been through proactive engagement. As Emily said, she has not had any one mentor, but rather she observes nature and people and finds joy in simple things. Emily saw wisdom in an elderly neighbour woman she regularly visited, sharing her experiences and day-to-day events and hearing of an older woman's past and present accomplishments in the daily, simple routine tasks of life.

From these bases of recognized strengths, Emily continues to enlarge her community outreach, broadening her experiences further, especially among those who perhaps have most to teach us, the aged and the children. Involved in her church community, she is sharing a spiritual maturity and therefore strengthening the reflective and critical thinking of those she contacts and connects with through her kindness, gentleness, acceptance and affirmation.

Nurture, empathy, compassion, loving warmth and support are all aspects of

women's in *relatedness*, a wisdom that has hardly even been tapped, given its widespread devaluation. (Greenspan, 1993, p. 226)

SOPHIA

I was born in England shortly before World War II. We were a happy family until during the War my father enlisted and my mother left. I lived with a relative and during the London Blitz was sent to the country and lived with relatives I did not know. After the War, my father remarried. When I was 12 to 13 years of age and attending a Convent boarding school in England, I remember thinking one evening that I would like to be a Nun or a Sister and deciding the next morning. In those days, a Catholic woman's choices were Sisterhood, marriage, teaching, nursing or secretarial work. My dreams and goals are coming out of those choices. Because I was English-born, my idea was not necessarily welcomed or encouraged at first by the Sisters. They had so many Irish candidates, and English girls usually didn't enter the Convent.

I think as I articulated what I wanted to do, I spoke strongly about not wanting to teach. I said I wanted to actually work with children. I was attracted to a Community that ran an orphanage near my Convent School. That's the one thing I can remember I wanted. I liked that Community and I wanted to work with children or with orphans. I'm not sure why I didn't want to teach. Probably I just didn't feel it was my calling. But I can't say. I don't have many memories about school or the way I was taught, but I can remember being really specific. "Why aren't you going to enter our Community?" they asked. I was specific. "Because I don't want to teach!" "You don't have to teach; we've got nurses, and everything else," they said. (I still think back sometimes to the Community of The Sisters of Nazareth, who ran the orphanage). During the 1950s there was still that sense of obedience when one took the vows. So they looked at my talents, skills, marks and education. As I was experiencing some family problems, I was asked whether I would like Canada. That had always been a dream of mine. I remember on several occasions during my novitiate getting as close to the Novitiate Mistress's door to request just that, but walking away. So I regarded this offer as God's Will.

When I arrived in Canada I was sent to the University for teacher certification. Following that year, I began my BEd. I don't recollect rebelling—having any thoughts about not wanting this degree because I didn't want to teach. But again, I think the limitations of professional opportunities factored. By that time I think I realized that I certainly didn't have a calling to be a nurse. It was only when I started student teaching that my actual aversion towards teaching returned to haunt me!

My first student teaching experience was with a Grade 1 class. My supervising teacher after observing one of my lessons recommended I see a psychologist because I only had eye

contact with the children in the front row. Of course, I know better now that with nervousness it is amazing that anybody can get up to do that. She was really furious and really took me to task. I was devastated!

That evening I told my Superior. She was very annoyed. She may have complained to the University, I don't know. But I can remember crying several mornings—not wanting to go student teaching. I remember the Superior telling me that Jesus said you should go out and preach the Good News. Of course, I didn't have the sophistication and knowledge then to say there are many other ways of preaching the Good News, so that injunction to preach the Gospel was directly related to teaching.

My second student teaching experience 6 months later was very different. I was sent to a Grade 6 class. The teacher was a really wonderful, cooperating person. When I told her how absolutely terrified I was that I'd have my first supervisor again, she said, "Well, you never mind about that, we'll work on it." She did. Then she gave me a religion class to teach. At the end of that class she said, "When you teach, imagine you're teaching religion because you really come alive. I'm really sorry we can't have you do a religion class for her." So I did. At the end of this student teaching experience this supervisor asked if I would consider being a demonstration teacher. So, I did a big jump, or perhaps she did.

Well, I ended up teaching. I started teaching in 1963, so that means my student teaching experiences were in 1962-1963. I taught junior high school students for 6-1/2 years, during which time I became recognized as a very good religion teacher. As there was no Grade 9 religion curriculum, I devised one. This was noticed by Central Office and I was invited to become a consultant.

Interestingly, during those years of classroom teaching I caught a lot of colds. During my first year, I lost my voice for 30 days—one was allowed 25 sick days. I frequently had a lot of trouble with my throat. It would become very, very constricted with the constant talking. I remember the doctor telling me and my Superior (they accompanied us in those days) that perhaps classroom teaching was not for me. I have always found teaching extremely difficult.

Because I was a consultant and also every 3 to 4 years I feel the need to refresh myself, to learn a little more, I began my Master's Degree in Religious Education. It took me three summers. It wasn't really a tough degree—you could either do a project or take two extra courses, so I took the two extra courses. I graduated in 1976. In 1980 I got a sabbatical from the District and I took an out-of-Province MA in Theology. That was very hard work! I had to write a thesis. I graduated in 1982. Professionally, now, a door opened. I was asked to teach at a theological college and was also their part-time Director of Religious Education for a time. So I moved into adult education teaching, my experience from then to now. I teach at both the undergraduate and post-graduate level. As a consultant for those many years I've had a lot of flexibility and have changed some of the rules. Between my adult

teaching and my sabbaticals I've had many opportunities.

I began my PhD when I realized that I wanted to broaden my field of education to include general education theory because religious education depends on both theology and education. Towards the end of my PhD, I realized I didn't want to continue as a consultant. I wanted something different. In 1990 I was given that opportunity while completing my course work. The Director of Religious Education took a year's sabbatical that he extended to two. I became the Director during his absence. Those were two very wonderful, creative years. Not that there weren't problems. At times, too, I really questioned being at the top of the bureaucratic heap. I'd arrive home and say "I'm not sure that this is good for my spirit." I realized you could really get caught up because you'd made it?

This Director was also a priest. In a leadership position, you are always aware that you are not a priest as you can't do some of the sacramental things. Then there are the problems people have. "Well, you know," he'd say, "as Director, people come in and share their problems." But I think I attracted a different set of people, certainly even some of the men. But I also had one male team member who never spoke to me directly during those two years, although he was cooperative at meetings.

I look back at what was a most marvellous opportunity to finish my doctorate while experiencing an equally wonderful opportunity for leadership—I received a lot of affirmation. I think one of the things I discovered was that I was a good leader, a good administrator. The person who had been Director of Religious Education had fed me a line—which I believed for many years—"Well, administration isn't really your thing, you know, you're a catechist. You wouldn't really like administration, it is so bureaucratic. You're the catechist." (This rings in my mind all the time). I used to accept that as a kind of compliment. In one sense that's true, that I would not want to buy into that model of administration, but what was wrong with it was that there was never any idea that maybe if you became a leader you would bring a different model! I think, as I look back on it now—and I have spoken to that person—that it was a very effective way (and I cooperated by believing in it) for me never once to think of applying for any kind of administrative or leadership position in all the years I was a consultant. It never occurred to me that I could do it!

I was very creative. My creativity came from realizing that I was well liked on staff. I conducted good meetings. I came prepared and I think people felt very valued and respected team members. The former director had also convinced me that the Religion Department would lose a lot of the budget money as I wouldn't have access to the back-room talk. I didn't lose money; I had a much more direct approach. I also discovered that I've some good, political skills. I grew in confidence. I was also always full of good ideas about things we could do. And with the others on the team, particularly one other person, we moved into retreat and reflection days. In recognizing that we had the leadership ability to implement our ideas, we were run off our feet for a couple of years. The Director before me was more

political. He put out fires. I have always been very creative in taking theological ideas and making them really down to earth, connecting to peoples' lives. I made the job more personally theologically reflective.

Then the Director decided to return. It removed that creative opportunity. They did try to create something—a position for me. But now there were financial cutbacks and all kinds of political issues. "We want you here and we want to give you this special position," they said. But while I received a lot of affirmation, this special position didn't really fit on the bureaucratic scale of titles. My supervisor—in this case a woman, possibly very restricted in what she could do—certainly did nothing to help me grow by giving me opportunities. So I went from being an extremely well-known, high-profile, very creative leader to having an office with very few phone calls because I wasn't on the structured list. I wasn't connected with any Department, so I had no meetings to attend and basically ended up with very little to do.

I finally had to take a stress leave. I cried a lot. I broke my ankle so was physically immobilized. Eventually I did go on a holiday to visit my family but I didn't do very much. I think what's maybe really important—and I've always reflected on this—I think the reason that I ended up taking a stress leave is that I took the opportunity to go with a friend to a November Conference in Florida. I stayed on, frequently sitting by the ocean, which has always been a very healing experience for me. Having gotten away from the work situation, I realized I was in trouble. All the emotions and everything came flying out.

When I returned to work in January, it was back to the Religion Department, which was really very difficult. I had an opportunity to become a Family-Life consultant, but I thought, "I'm getting to the end of this; I don't know anything about family life; at least I know about religious education so I'd better put up and shut up! I went back for 2 months in May and June and then again in September. I now realized I just couldn't continue. I managed to go on .7 time in order to teach a day course at a college. At the end of that school year I resigned. That was a huge risk as I had no pension that first year. But I was lucky, because as soon as people found out that I was free during the day I was approached by three colleges. I overloaded myself running around the three. But I was really fortunate as I was known enough and to this day, if I wanted to, I could be teaching full time among them.

However, I've come to a point in the road where I'm having a lot of religious, spiritual, and doctrinal questions about my church. I certainly feel at this particular point that I have less and less loyalty to its teachings which is burdensome for the teaching of religious education. If I am going to be true to religious education within a particular faith community, then I should try to teach what that church teaches. It's not the time to raise critical-consciousness issues amongst undergraduates who know little or nothing about the basic church teachings.

Teaching the eucharist and the image of God, for example, are personally extremely painful. Feminine imaging of God is accepted in private prayer, but official liturgical guidelines do

not permit it, so I feel I'm teaching a little bit of a lie. I also feel that a certain number of students will be more supportive of the conservative approach. Yet I've only had one criticism so far from a student (only the one) concerned that I'm too much of a feminist theologian, although he/she did say this is not inconsistent with being a college professor.

Inclusive language and women's ordination are also issues. Up until about 5 or 6 years ago, while there were issues that disquieted me, I was happy within the Church. When asked in class, "Why don't they ordain women? Why don't they use inclusive language?" I could always say, "Well, these things take time; these are long decisions; they have to be worked out; people are doing their work, we have these discussions." I could show them the Church was working at it. Now I can't. We have been told that the issue of women's ordination is an infallible and an irrevocable teaching; it's not to be discussed. This has rippled the community. I was teaching a course on the Church at a college several years' ago, and I had a large number of extremely conservative seminarians in the class. A woman in this class asked me, obviously, a lot of questions about the Church. I found as I went through the course that I couldn't handle her questions and I found myself teaching to more the conservative side of ecclesiology—I was getting safer and safer by the day. I actually had to tell her I couldn't handle her questions. She was very nice, said she had begun to recognize it, and she'd back off. But the point is that I began to realize the compromise and that it's not right. I guess I've come to a point in my life where I am not loyal enough to this Church tradition to teach religious education in it; can I still find a way to teach religious education to reform or renew the Church—which has been my direction for the last 5 or 6 years? I've always said, "I want to be a religious educator because this is the way to renew people. Education is liberation!" I really believe that. But recently I've been asking myself, "Do I really want to spend my energy in places and spaces where I feel this weight of negativity behind me? Can I find ways to educate in 'open' places?"

I think that this is a gift of getting older, looking at some of your limitations. Not that you have to sit with your limitations and say, "Well, that's me; I can't change." I think this dilemma vis-à-vis my own church community and whether I can continue teaching is having me reflect upon my own psychology of the self! I think another person could subversively teach his/her ideas—continue using his/her voice. A friend of mine has encouraged me, challenged me, to think about this in myself. I took an enneagram workshop recently. While I dislike the categorical ways some people use their results from Myers Briggs and enneagram workshops, I will say that an insight for me was that my dominant feature was peacemaker. And, yes, I do try to be adaptable, to compromise. But while this is a gift, you don't end up being really true to yourself. On Friday night, I caught myself justifying a traditional position in the Church. Recently I've had the experience of observing my own voice "out there" speaking in a way that I'm not happy with. I hear myself teaching? You know how St. Paul speaks about an out-of-body experience? I am having out-of-voice experiences! You see, I know my theology and my religious education and my church really well! I can hear Sophia's voice "out there" teaching and I'm beginning to understand that that's not Sophia's voice anymore! So, I'm going on a journey.

I'm going to take a year away from teaching. I'm calling it a contemplative year. I don't know if I'm looking for a "big message in the sky" as to where I am going, but I would like to at least give myself the space from religion as much as possible to try to hear myself spiritually in another way. This, too, is really fascinating. I've never been interested in the goddess thing at all. I'd heard a number of feminists have found it helpful. It just hadn't interested me. But some time this year I ended up in a bookstore and bought a book called *Through the Goddess, a Way to Healing*. I now recognize I need to understand who the goddess was and how she functioned for people in ritual and faith. Recognizing that most of the great cathedrals of Europe are named Notre Dame (Mary), and are built on previous goddess sites, I feel the need to discover what was there before the cathedral. In a way it reflects my spiritual journey—discovering more ancient roots. I've suddenly become very, very interested in pre-Christian rituals which actually are expressing Christianity—for example, light and water, all those things. I've got big scary questions about Christianity!

On Friday night a group of us women from different Religious Orders met with young women interested in our Vocation. One question was, "How do you feel, how do you understand yourself as a consecrated woman within the Church?" And I said, "Well, quite honestly, I don't know how I understand myself as a woman in the Church, period, never mind any adjectives!" But the odd thing which I can't explain is that even if I left the Church I'd still want to live out this lifestyle one names Nun or Sister. I'd still want to live this original call, the celibate lifestyle—I've always been there.

It's interesting about the teaching though. I find teaching very difficult! I like to teach, but I'm better working with older life-experienced people like teachers who can really sit and talk. I must admit I find undergraduates hard—it's almost like being back in a high school—there's a piece of me that says I don't want in! I'm actually just not wanting to teach, even though I do a good job. Young peoples' evaluations are good even though I'm not that visually tuned in to videotapes, charts and things. I'm surprised that I've done well. I'm waiting for them to say something like, "She's boring, she doesn't use videotapes."

I do recognize I'm a good educator. It's a gift given me. Somehow I feel in taking my year I will find ways to continue that gift of facilitating learning and sharing. Probably my richest experience presently is working with DMin students on individual studies—it's so enriching. Maybe I will find during the course of this year that I can return to college teaching, differently. I think I try to be a person of integrity. Somehow I have to be a believer in what I'm teaching. The other thing is, I feel strongly that I need to leave the academic head stuff for a while. I even journalled the other day that I've got a lot of things to sort out next year. I have a strong feeling that these will not be solved through my head. I've never had this. I've been brought up to read, to think, to be a logical thinker. For the very first time, I feel there is another way to learn—maybe through the body, through ritual, through gardening. I certainly want to do some reading but I've a very strong message coming through me that I'm not to take the whole year just to read, that I need to do some non-head things. I think that maybe there are some other creative gifts there that I haven't

discovered about myself in that sense. I want to learn more about gardening; I want to practise my piano. I've got a piano I haven't practised for a long time. And I want to give myself permission just to "doodle around" and not do anything.

I've found myself saying I could end up in one of three ways at the end of the year—I can't accept Christianity at all; the Christ experience, the Christian framework while limited as many religions are, is a good framework to express one's beliefs in the holy; or, that I cannot identify myself as a member of the Roman Catholic church at this time and therefore I need to choose another home for a sense of worship community. I am attracted to the Anglican church, basically because of my British heritage. As a baby I was baptized in an Anglican church. I think most of the Anglican church is quite pre-Vatican II in many ways, so I certainly wouldn't be going to it because it is really refreshing. My metaphor is sometimes that of a battered woman—very sad to leave my beautiful home but sometimes having to live in circumstances that are alien but safer. So I sometimes see these three paths, yet I'm trying to be careful because even that is getting a little too logical. Again, I may do something different. I'm trying not to think about choices.

It's really scary. I usually don't take too long to figure out where I'm going but this is quite a different path. I've got no idea. I've been placed in quite a vulnerable position having to tell two men who have offered me the possibility of a combined full-time position that I'm on a spiritual journey. "She says she's on a process?" I'm willing to lose a lot of money over this. When I was young I thought about the Contemplative Order. At that time I decided against it, but I am once again finding this idea interesting. I certainly would have much more to work with now.

The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you, the better you will hear what is sounding outside. And only he who listens can speak. Is this the starting-point of the road towards the union of your two dreams—to be allowed, in clarity of mind to mirror life, and in purity of heart to mould it? (Hammar skjöld, 1964, p. 35)

What challenges Sophia?

Throughout her professional and personal life, Sophia appears to have creatively and intellectually challenged her internalised vow of obedience, not defiantly but with vision. From the time she entered the Religious Order, her life experiences have been, for the most part, personally growth-enhancing, professionally and academically rewarding. Except for the one instance (her first student-teaching experience) Sophia seems to have received public

affirmation and respect. Professionally, in the main, she has been consistently rewarded for her initiative and creative resolution of challenges. Opportunities appear, Sophia recognizes them, uses her initiative, accepts the challenge, and moves forward into ever-widening social spaces. Somewhat like a ripple in a pool, Sophia keeps enlarging her circles of interactive influence.

Now she is reading another signpost. One direction seems to be pointing her away from her vocational calling, away from her Church home, in the direction of risk, controversy and possible aloneness; the other, towards Vocational and home-base safety in conformity, by adopting—and adapting towards—a more conservative, more traditional stance. Her present dilemma involves listening to her affective intuitive inner voice, or not. Significantly, her voice indicated a change of direction at one earlier time, when Sophia was in her 20s. Heeding her voice less during her first year of teaching together with a supervising teacher's comments channelled Sophia into partially resolving her aversion to teaching by teaching religion. This knowledge base secure, she was able to use her creative skills, writing a curriculum that up to then was non-existent. Her success both in the classroom and in curriculum development ultimately led to her consulting position.

From the inception of the first anomic experience of her early 50s, Sophia has consciously or unconsciously been challenging her unresolved tasks along that epigenetic chart, interweaving her resolvments into her present life journey and experiences (Erikson, 1963). She has chosen the generativity path, contributing to strengthening future generations (Erikson, 1963). She shares her academic knowledge and ideas with young undergraduates and the more life-experienced post-graduates, engaging and encouraging reflective thinking. Mindful of the knowledge base of her students, she carefully considers and determines the level of provocative discussion. Now, it seems, Sophia is moving towards the wisdom path. At this time, she has chosen a soul-searching journey—hers. Her philosophy, borrowed from Freire, "education is liberation," has brought her to her identity crisis, an identity crisis that envelops her Vocation, given her belief system, values and ethics. This crisis threatens her

very core, her very Essence of Self. Yet this very crisis is a honing, a tilling, a harvesting of Sophia's personal integrity.

Generativity

At 52 years of age, Sophia was thriving. Using one curriculum component, she was completing her PhD dissertation on an aspect of voice as institutionally used and interpreted to define women's socioreligious roles. She envisioned women's future recognition and participation in her Church (and socioculturally in other areas) with anticipation. Correspondingly, to her delight and surprise, she was experiencing acclamation as an administrator in a particular administrative position she'd been led to believe unsuitable for her talents and gender. Sophia introduced an alternate leadership style that was facilitative and reflective, encouraging all team members' interactive participation. Her self-confidence grew as her experience broadened and her professional network widened. Her opportunities, challenges, experiences, and interaction with people of diverse backgrounds and interests in her intellectual, professional and personal life were creatively energizing, fueling possibilities and optimism.

Stagnation

Then she experienced anomie. How did this happen? The former administrator returned and resumed his role. Sophia was given an office, a bureaucratically meaningless title, and an administrator seemingly unsure of Sophia's organizational role. It seems she was strategically displaced, bypassed into what I term the "faceless lane." From active, vibrant departmental interaction and challenges she was being effectively silenced through institutional compartmentalization and deprivation. *Sophia's issue was her authentic voice, the Essence of her Self being defined, yet again, at the institutional level.*

How She Resolved her Dilemma

Given two possibilities, Sophia returned to her former position, only to realize she had

outgrown it! The non-challenge depressed and enervated her, sapping her creative energy. Sophia took her distance during December, frequently sitting on the beach in reflective isolation. Here she recognized the extent of her psychic distress. On her return to Edmonton, she took a 4-month stress leave. During this leave-taking, she broke her ankle. This physical inconvenience further encouraged reflection. She visited England, reconnecting with family. She resolved this first anomic experience logically over the next number of months by moving to .7 time and teaching one course at the college level. At the end of that school year, Sophia took a calculated risk and resigned, conscious of her economic vulnerability. Nevertheless, her courageous risk-taking opened doors, as at this point she was offered teaching opportunities at three colleges and has since been teaching at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Rather than isolating her, Sophia's wider professional community legitimized her continuing sociocultural contribution, the students' ages now closer to the mid-life adult.

Finding One's Corner-stone: The Power of Initiative

"I did *not* want to teach!" said Sophia. Heeding her Calling to become a Catholic Sister, Sophia intended guarding her independent voice, the core value and corner-stone of her identity. She would not and could not be institutionally mandated away from her inner Self. In process, Sophia has used teaching as her passport to personhood, a formidable task given the traditional Religious organization in which she remains actively involved.

Did her Superiors betray her? Teaching *enabled* access into the university, voice, social power, and continuing intellectual development. Sophia's youth lacked experiential wisdom. Wiser and generatively-oriented adults with life experiences behind them, seized the opportunity when seeing female potential. How Sophia ultimately became a team player was her challenge. She would write the next act. It was Sophia's choice once that intellectual foundation stone had been laid. How she ultimately challenged her creativity to accomplish her Self, building upon that cornerstone, was her responsibility.

The discipline of her young adult years assisted her through a difficult passage, and a calculated risk, in her early 50s. As her life has evolved, Sophia's voice has enabled directions and creative solutions, which she has heeded. Her voice has been her medium that guides her initiative and creativity. Creating a curriculum where one was non-existent, she inadvertently reinstated the independent voice of her Self and her destiny.

Whither now?

Approximately 5 years later, at the time of this interview and since, Sophia is again experiencing anomie. Again her issue is recognition and respect for her authentic voice, but this time the focus has shifted. *The issue now is Sophia's personal integrity, involving her inner voice, her Essence of Self, epitomized for Sophia in her spiritual self/voice resolving the institutional voice—for her, involving her vow of obedience to the authority of the Church.*

Sophia intentionally appears to be claiming her Self, to be used generatively (Erikson, 1963). No longer is her vow of obedience a compliant acceptance of others' interpretation of how and to what degree she involves herself in Community. As she explained, "I do try to be adaptable, to compromise, but while this is a gift, you don't end up being really true to yourself." Her anomic experiences and resolution of 5 years' previous was her turning point. Since then she has progressively been exploring more and more facets of her life creatively and proactively. Using a scholarly exploratory approach (again, in keeping with the Freirean method), Sophia is tilling and exploring her own ground, and her own values. By reading women scholars' research on the goddess religion, its rituals and emphases, she is challenging and clarifying her spiritual base while broadening her scholastic understanding. She will, as she said, "do some non-head things . . . maybe there are some other creative gifts there that I haven't discovered about myself in that sense."

Throughout this exploration, Sophia's Community network is encouraging, affirming and supporting her. A close friend's insightful questions assisted Sophia's focus towards

maintaining her composure and confidence. Professionally, her recent decision to decline a full-time teaching position seems to have been met with a mix of admiration and puzzlement. Together with her composure and confidence, one observes Sophia's disquiet and level of anxiety that she is yet again veering from a socioculturally known, admired, and respected path.

Key Themes

Interweaving Sophia's life story, her journeying, are two underlying issues: the issue of voice (of control and freedom in the use, hearing and dialoguing with her voice); and the issue of trust interwoven in the threads of abandonment of her voice during segments of her personal life. After taking her vows of obedience, her voice was overridden and she became a teacher. Her intuitive voice lessened, Sophia accepted and internalized the voices of others, using her initiative to maximize her potential within the given parameters. Then she selected the intellectual pathway. Results and colleagues' feedback indicate Sophia was, and is, motivated by goodwill and an interest in the commonweal.

Approximately 20 years later, now professionally and academically successful, Sophia unquestionably accepted a priest-friend's opinion of her administrative capabilities versus her catechetical skills. Later recognition of her compliance with his viewpoint only emphasized the betrayal and injustice of wasted years. Her use of "you" at times rather than "I" perhaps indicates a still distancing from her pain, her feelings of loss. However, when one takes dual responsibility for an erroneous belief, compassionate understanding becomes possible. Sophia reflects no bitterness in her conversation, nor a false humility. She spoke matter-of-factly, using both her affective and logical voice. Seeking clarification, and with resolve, she confronted this person. "What was wrong," she said, was that "there was never any idea that maybe if you became a leader you would bring a different model!" Given her strong sense of a "Calling," the degree of respect accorded her voice is also a socioreligious and therefore a sociocultural issue, primarily one of institutionally constructed gender parameters.

Sophia encapsulated her maturing process in Freire's (1970) statement, *Education is Liberation*. As Sophia said, "I really believe that." It is her practicum in teaching preference of one-on-one, in her workshops, retreats and administrative style. An overview of her lifestyle patterns, of opportunities offered and initiatives taken, revealed this lived and living experience of Freire's. One could observe the stepping stones unconsciously moving her toward this present contemplative year, this personally reflective moratorium for refocusing direction, her Self integrity, ethics, values, and honor, rather than the institutional voice now becoming the focus. To this point, Sophia had focused and shared her talents and creativity in institutional service. As "the catechist," her parameters were Religious constructed, Authority manipulating her social spaces and fields.

The Essence of Self: Stifling its Knowing

In her childhood, Sophia experienced physical and affective loss. Early in World War II, her father enlisted; her mother left. During the London Blitz, Sophia was sent into unfamiliar country areas to stay with relatively unknown relatives. As a toddler did she feel abandoned? Sophia was a virtual orphan. Entering a Convent boarding school when school age, alone in a sea of classroom and dormitory faces, who *really* attended to Sophia's person, her affective-voice self? Is this perhaps why she did not want to teach, why she took care of the abandoned child, the traumatized, the troubled, the alone? She didn't want to miss the special soul in the sea of faces, possibly her isolation/loneliness experience. Interactive growth and personality development seems to be Sophia's teaching preference, shown when years later she accompanied a troubled adolescent who liked to sing. Each challenged anxiety. In the eyes of his peers, the youth's status and self-esteem surely improved.

Towards an Essence of Self: Voicing Intentional Knowing

However, it was one thing to acquiesce in her youth, to interpret events as the obedience vow, as "God's Will. But Sophia is no longer as "naive," as she terms it, but more "sophisticated." Three significant markers of her adolescence and early 20s, of her intuitive,

affective component—a Contemplative Order, working with orphans, overlooking of her voice—are now once again coming into focus. Significantly, she mentioned two mentors: one, a saint she admired during her adolescence, who was canonized because of her value of the ordinary, the other, a friend she sees as a possible Spiritual Director who asked her to consider whether she could remain in her present position subversively teaching her ideas as some others are able to do.

Referencing St. Paul's out-of-body experience (St. Paul, frequently quoted by the male Religious) with her "out-of-voice experience" emphasizes the extent of Sophia's conflict. This issue of voice has been significant in Sophia's movement along her journey—ignoring her voice that she didn't want to teach; her rationalization of her inner voice that it was God's Will, her vows of obedience; and her loss of voice when she began classroom teaching. When one reads her PhD dissertation, one sees the evolvment of her voice through scholarship. Voice (verbal, written, silencing, body) constructs one's gender attitudes. Recently, Sophia found herself defending conservative tradition. It disturbed her. As she related, "I've had the experience of observing my own voice "out there" speaking in a way that I'm not happy with." Was she moving toward a resignation of her role, her Calling, or is she moving toward continuing participation of self (talents, knowledge, experiences, values) in an ever-widening social space? The thought disturbed her. For psychological health and continuing self-actualization, a personal moratorium is essential as one enters middle life (Jung, 1976; Erikson, 1963). With her usual resolve, Sophia is stepping outside certain Religious boundaries and into her unique spiritual-growth process.

How is she listening to her inner voice? She is using aesthetic pursuits to assist—piano, journalling, travel, family relationships, institutional "time out." For approximately 20 years, it appears that Sophia diverted her creative energies into her professional life and into her academic studies. Now she will divert those creative energies into Self growth for a time. In daily, routine activities, Sophia intends to observe and listen to these synthesizing processes, to create her own canvas, her life as *her* work of art. The European psychoanalyst,

Jung, defines this process:

The inner voice is the voice of a fuller life, of a wider, more comprehensive consciousness . . . The inner voice brings to consciousness whatever the whole—whether the nature to which we belong or the humanity of which we are a part—suffers from. (Jung, in Moustakas, 1956, p. 156-157)

A Moratorium of a Self

A significant turning point, a key statement that appeared to be an indicator of her future direction lay in her comment, "I would like to at least give myself the space from religion as much as possible to try to hear myself spiritually in another way." What is interesting in this sentence is her choice of words, her use of "religion" (structured, organizational) and "spiritual" (the personal, reflective application). It appears she is making a choiceful shift away from socioreligious ethical concerns over the perceived stability of tradition, and towards a carefully considered personal ethic. She is questioning the authenticity and integrity of her voice vis-à-vis her responsibility to that tradition as it impacts on current cultural trends.

Sophia's Way

Accordingly, Sophia elected to take an incubation period, a year of "doodling." While currently stepping "outside" into isolation to renew and reflect the context, she mentally stands within and without as she reflects upon her responsible and responsive choice toward her socioreligious and sociocultural participation. What is noticeable on Sophia's wisdom pathway is her return to the aesthetic in solitude, to a concentration on the contemplative in the everyday female pursuits—an intended return to the piano to encourage a spiritual indwelling, an intention for the first time to "doodle around" and deliberately ignore her logic, her intellect, her "head" voice as much as possible. Her logical mind knows the issues. She is calling on her intuitive potential now, the somewhat dormant part of her personal development. Now comes the difficult time: converting approximately 40 years of social service to a year of personal introspection and reflection, personal focus, and personal relationship in a journey towards rediscovering her Essence of Self.

How is Sophia presently confronting her challenge? Searching her own conscience, she ethically considers the degree of sophistication of the other person(s) before raising "critical consciousness issues"—one first needs a values base. Her experiential, affective, and intellectual personal spaces have made her well aware of how knowledge is constructed. She is well aware of the difficulties and fragilities of altering entrenched tradition. Yet she intends researching the original goddess religion of her birth country, specifically to see what and how significant rituals were incorporated by this Church. How respectful was her Church?

Currently, Sophia stands at a crossroads. Should she compromise loyalty to her integrity, to her personal truth by accepting traditional dogma, or will she critically review the issue of women and voice according to her conscience, her intuitive sensing? While she is reflecting upon her future, Sophia is engaged in one-on-one academic input with DMin interdenominational students. Her whole sense of Self is the issue, her identity within her Faith community, and of integrity towards her Self, her personal voice as well as her professional voice. She realises it could "well mean inclusion or exclusion from Community." She also recognizes her social contribution: "I have touched many peoples' hearts and minds." Her dilemma revolves around the respect given a woman's voice; who controls it, how it is used, how it is listened to, how heard, and who interprets that voice. And in light of a recent Papal edict, what future direction may be decreed for women? Will women once again be spoken for; will women once again be "Othered?"

So, as life experiences build, an ethical question may present itself. At this time, Sophia's ethical issues are focused on her limits. "If I am going to be true to religious education within a particular Faith community, then I should try to teach what that church teaches." And her strengths: "My creativity is always being able to take theological ideas and bring them down to earth connecting with peoples' lives." In following her voice, Sophia has once again chosen a calculated risktaking. She is now challenging a bigger unknown—the very foundation of her belief system, her Vocation, her calling. Yes, "it's really scary." But the

resolution of her first anomic experience expanded her community involvement. Now Sophia in choosing not to enter certain "rooms," is walking into new spaces, and is showing personal integrity using her authentic voice in a responsible, autonomous way. She is now educating her intuitive component and being educated by it. Within herself now are sufficient knowledge bases and experiences together with externally diverse network or friendship-relationship circles she can use as tools to explore her own internal spaces. Resilient and proactive, Sophia is sculpting her lifeworld.

My own experience has taught me that it is not transcendence but the fullness of living consciously that is healing. Healing for me has been journeying through, not above. (Greenspan, 1993, p. xxxiv)

MARGARET

I was born in 1937 and went to a one-teacher, one-room country primary school. We had approximately 14 children in the seven grades. I didn't go to high school although I was very bright. My teacher at one stage spoke with my parents and my mother actually asked me whether I wanted to go to college. I had no concept of being away from home as none of my brothers and sisters had, so I said no. I don't think I had any great plans for what I wanted to do. I think probably when I was asked (which would have been in my pre-teens at school) I would have answered, "Oh, a nurse, or a teacher." Because that's what women did.

Living on a farm with five older sisters and an older brother, you just expected to do what they did, and what your family background was. One sister was a nurse, the others worked in packing sheds, picked grapes or helped families, such as when a mother was away having a baby. We were brought up very traditionally. I think probably family members, the pastors and church members have had the greatest influence on my life.

I worked on the farm until I married and moved to this house when I was 20 years old. Mostly, I guess, I did household and farm chores such as milking the cows. Occasionally, I helped move the sheep or worked in the shearing shed. At one stage I helped my father clear scrub, basically because I was getting paid by the hour. It was some extra money. I helped families, too, when necessary. I remember riding a motorbike to one family for a couple of days while a mother was in hospital with a new baby. For a time, too, during my teens, I was also our Youth Group's secretary. In those days, of course, girls didn't become president.

I was probably married 3 years before our first child was born and then I largely looked

after the children and house. I think I probably didn't start off with any great ambitions other than to lead what was considered a normal life at that time—a wife, a mother, and community-volunteer activities. I guess I was involved in community activities on the organizational side right from the start. When the children were babies, I was secretary of the Mothers' and Babies' Health Association, then once the children began public school, I was involved with the Welfare Club. You had to have a women's group to raise funds for the school, and someone had to do it. I started with Meals-on-Wheels when it began and I've been with them ever since. Later I became involved in the Rotary Club's Opportunity Shop.

I stayed with the Primary School Welfare Club until our youngest child began high school. And then I became involved with our church's Primary School Welfare Club because of my experience in the State school. My husband and I were interested in a church school, so I decided I would take this in hand; if somebody helped me that was fine but otherwise I would do it! I was their Welfare Club president for the first 4 to 5 years. I think because it was a new project, while attendances weren't large, there was always support.

While our children were still in primary school, I was involved with our family history, interviewing, collecting and selecting photographs, collating, proofreading, getting the book to the publisher. It was probably my idea initially, but then two of us became involved and gave each other the impetus to continue. I realized we had to compile our history while the older folks were still living. We interviewed the older folks then wrote up their individual life histories, beginning by visiting a local community where there was an enclave of family members. It was here that I got in touch with a distant cousin and after that we worked together. We had different people in charge of the different sections where they knew the people. Ours was probably one of the first books that included birth, marriage, and death dates. My husband was the emcee at the large family get-together. Yes, that was quite significant. I was very pleased and very happy with that.

As well, I have always enjoyed art, drawing and painting. I remember my mother drawing for me. It was always the same thing but I thought she did it very well. I guess I gravitated towards art because I was always considered good at drawing even in primary school. If you're good at something, you're going to enjoy doing it. When people praise you for it, that's even more encouraging and so you continue. I actually won third prize in a State-wide School Art Contest.

I guess my children were probably in primary school when I first started art classes. My main outlet just for myself apart from church, community activities and committees has been my art. I began with oils with a lass who was teaching art. I didn't do very much art then. I think I wondered what the value was, as I didn't think my paintings would ever be good enough to sell. "Besides," I thought, "I don't need the money because we are quite comfortably off." And it also took time away from family and home. I also went through a stage of thinking, "Well, what really is the point of painting or trying to be brilliant because you never will be?" But gradually I became more involved. I enrolled some years later in

several TAFE classes, beginning with drawing, then moving into water colours. I had just begun a course in design when my father-in-law became ill so I did not complete it.

Then our son had a severe accident. He was a seminarian at the time. He was in a city hospital for a couple of months and there's an interesting point. I tried to read and found I could only concentrate on art books. I did find it interesting that I could concentrate on art books but not on a story. In a lot of ways my art has helped me in times of stress. It has helped me to work my way through things. I did a few sketches when he was in hospital, one I hated looking at because it looked just like he looked in the hospital bed. He had a head injury and so would talk non-stop when he first came out of hospital. It was quite difficult to deal with. Nevertheless, after a long convalescence, our son successfully completed his vicarage and resumed his seminary studies. Then 6 months short of graduating into the ministry, he was told he was unsuitable after all!

I had begun keeping a diary 2 years before our son's accident as I felt it would improve my writing skills. My diary was probably fairly stilted until our son's accident when I began writing more how I was feeling. Actually, I found this journalling very helpful when he was in hospital. I could write out my feelings; I could get rid of them. There's actually one page that I've glued a piece of paper over that I don't want anyone to see. I spoke to my Pastor at that time about that page. "I think I'd better tear that out," I said, and he said, "No, leave it there. That's how you felt at the time, so just leave it there." So that's what I've done.

I remember when our son was still in hospital I felt very down, and I made some comment to the doctor and he said, "Oh, that's normal," and that was that. So I never, ever spoke to the doctor or anybody about it, no counselling or anything. But this one pastor was very important to me; I would occasionally telephone and offload everything onto him. Fortunately he had broad shoulders. I think my actual depression may have started after our son had resumed his seminary studies. I'm not certain. Whether that was because I was released from concentrating solely on him for several years, on what he was doing, on trying to help him, I don't know. His speech especially is still not as good. He tends to stutter a lot.

I really don't know how it all works. I just tried to keep on doing the things I was doing. On the surface, I didn't do anything differently, but I withdrew. I can remember feeling as if I was surrounded by a black cloak and I could just see a pinpoint of light out the front. I couldn't talk about it. I never talked about it to my husband. I cried a lot. I think I was probably depressed for a couple of years. I wasn't even sure whether people realized, though my pastor's wife would always make a point of saying, "How are you, Margaret?" and I would always respond. I think she knew. Sometimes I would walk down the street in dark glasses thinking people couldn't see me, until I went into the newsagent's shop one day and overheard the owner talking about "dealing with difficult people." I decided it was me he was talking about. "That's it," I thought, "I won't let people see me when I'm like this in the future, and I'll snap out of it."

So I began the uphill climb. I was 52 years old then. The depression gradually lifted. Quite often I'd wake up in the morning and I'd feel fine for a few seconds. Then gradually this feeling extended to a quarter-of-an-hour before the blackness would close in again. Finally it was 4 hours. Slowly these periods extended until I'd have a whole day of feeling fine. Then the depression actually lifted quite quickly, probably within a couple of weeks. I can't quite remember, but I keep a diary, so it's probably all in my diary. I can remember many days writing when I was very weepy.

I resumed my painting. I enrolled in an adult painting class. A pastor's wife had become our Church schools' artist-in-residence. She also taught adult classes and we brought her here. She helped me realise that one should use one's artistic talent, even if only for birthday cards for friends. So you learn a little from the different teachers. When I first picked up the brush, I remember I relaxed, "I'll never be good at this, so I will just enjoy myself," I thought, and I did! I found I am good at art! At first I thought I'd do just greeting cards, but when my one daughter admired a view, wishing it could be captured on camera, I painted it for her for Christmas. I painted a still-life for my other daughter. And she, too, was very pleased. I painted these water colors and then I went to TAFE again. TAFE had a one-day silk-painting workshop. I so enjoyed it that I later made two large church banners.

I haven't taken classes for some time now. I haven't really touched watercolors for a long time. Actually, I always find it very difficult to get started on something. My own most recent work was designing and making those silk-screen banners. I've since designed fabric appliqué banners. Other people do the fabric part, but I generally decide that we should have a banner. The fabric ones are actually hanging at the church but I've kept the silk ones. I hang them at Christmas and Easter, then bring them home again to store.

I have resumed my painting again, and am looking at tole. I am setting up a workshop in that; I have a teacher in mind. And recently our church congregations were invited to design and make a small panel as part of a large piece. I guess because I've been involved with that kind of thing in the past, I was asked whether I would take that in hand. A group came together to work on it. I had drawn up a couple of designs and they decided what we were going to do. We worked as a group, cutting and placing the felt pieces. I did the embroidery as some were a bit hesitant to try out their skills on something which they saw as so important. I haven't done a lot of embroidery so it was many hours of very slow work, but it's finished and I'm quite pleased with it.

A few years ago, I organized a craft morning after one of my friends suggested it. We simply decided it would work. We run one morning a week during each school semester, organizing 4 or 5 leaders with different crafts. We have a creche for the young mothers as without that there would just be the older folk. So we have a mixed group, from the young mothers to 60s-plus women, generally from 12 to a maximum of 25 people. Some men attend, depending on the activity. Our calligraphy and découpage leaders were male, so some men came then.

I also started a senior ladies' group. It's an outing for them. We meet twice a month in a private home and I pick up and take 3 or 4 of them. On Wednesday there were 14 women there. We make rugs for welfare using second-hand fabrics and second-hand wool discarded at the Opportunity Shop. They don't always like crocheting. Some of them wind wool; some of them undo jumpers [sweaters]; some of them unpick skirts. Some of them can't see very well anymore or their hands don't work very much but I encourage them to come. They just do whatever they can cope with at the time. The conversation is the main part. We've made over 400 bed covers for welfare in the 11 years we've been meeting.

Shortly before our son's accident, my husband took over the Undertaking [Funeral Home] business from his father. He basically did the work himself for a few years, then one day asked me to be his assistant as additional help was needed. Our son had resumed his seminary studies by that time. My first funeral was a young woman member of the congregation, and my husband thought it would be very appropriate for me to participate. We had some very good comments from people following that, so then I generally helped him at funerals. Things have changed also over the years. In the early days there were no Book of Memories, no donations, envelopes and things like that. I do the calligraphy in the Book of Memories. Nowadays you really need two people at least, and if we are expecting a big funeral, the three of us—our son is now also involved.

I'm satisfied with my life. I'm very fortunate to have a very caring husband, perhaps he almost cares for me too much in some ways in that sometimes he restricts what I'm doing because he will do it for me? When our son was in a city hospital I had to drive in the city and I could do it. But then, when I didn't have to anymore, my husband just automatically took over. So you see, some things, I think, I haven't done because my husband does them well. I know he does them for me for a good reason because he cares for me. But in some ways that can be restrictive. Yet I think I probably see myself as generally having a leadership role. Perhaps that is because my husband is always seen as a leader, so perhaps that's a good thing there! Sometimes I am seen as an extension of my husband. I remember once someone suggested I speak at a function. I simply said, "Not me." And I think they were surprised because they thought, well, my husband can talk and so I can talk. I think perhaps I was more confident a few years ago until that period of depression. That reduced my confidence a lot.

I am quite happy with what I am doing. My main focus is to continue being a good wife and grandmother. I will continue with my various painting projects. At times I still wonder about their value. I realize, too, that I have given everything to family members. My sister puts her craft work in the local craft shop. She said that way if somebody buys it you know they want it. Perhaps I'll try that, rather than giving someone something that they're stuck with. My children and church community have liked my art work, though. I've received good comments which is surprising as people rarely comment. It's generally the same people, but then, some people simply accept what is there.

I adore my two grandchildren. I'm astonished at how little children learn. Elizabeth is almost 3 years old, and visits me every Monday. She really enjoys coming. I'm really interested in helping her develop into the best person she can be. I see that as quite a challenge, assisting her in her ability to cope with things, and to evaluate. I don't talk to her in baby language and she uses amazingly big words. You say them once and she knows them. I'm sure my children were the same, I just didn't realize what they were learning because I was with them all the time. I hope I don't spoil her. I do just whatever Elizabeth wants to do all day long, so I hope I'm not spoiling her.

Recently I was talking with a friend and I said, "Sometimes I think we're supposed to be inadequate, that the younger people don't think we have anything to offer, that we should disappear." But I've really come out of my shell. I do strive towards being a caring and a compassionate person, being a good person, I suppose. I am just an ordinary person, but the community has certainly welcomed my involvement. Life is actually bubbling right along.

You need not, and in fact cannot, teach an acorn to grow into an oak tree, but when given a chance, its intrinsic potentialities will develop. Similarly, the human spirit, given a chance, tends to develop his particular human potentialities. He will develop then the unique alive force of his real self. (Horney, 1956 , p. 220)

Overview

Within some cultures, with the lessening of gender stereotyping, the use of inclusive language, and the enabling and equalizing of educational, professional and community opportunities, some women, too, are developing their intrinsic potential. I believe Margaret is such a person. Within a comparatively conventional but supportive sociocultural environment, Margaret elected to undertake what Horney (1956) named "self-realization" (p. 220). Margaret, her family, friends, and community have personally and collectively benefitted. First, a brief contextual overview.

Margaret was born in 1937, the youngest child within a Lutheran family. The Great Depression was drawing to a close; a devastating World War (the second within 25 years) loomed on the horizon. During this era, especially within a country farming community such as Margaret's childhood home, family and church were closely knit. One was encouraged,

covertly and overtly, to model one's life on personalities within the social spaces of one's family and church environment. Life was somewhat cloistered, making one generally wary of the wider environs as "outside."

The years of compulsory schooling ended at 14. Margaret was "very bright." Her parents had managed with little formal education, and so, it seemed, were her siblings managing. She, the youngest, followed this pattern. Her "world" had a defined radius of farm, church, nearest town and an occasional city visit. Farm work and occasionally helping out in some service capacity until marriage was not unusual for many Lutheran women then, emerging from a tightly-knit ethnic-religious community. Marrying "outside" at that point (1950s) was likely to be regarded as reflecting a family's possible religious dysfunction. Within this church community, an adolescent female could be a church Youth Group secretary (as Margaret was), but not its president. Instead, her role was to encourage and build a young adolescent male's self-confidence in this leadership role. While an adult woman held a leadership position within an all-woman organization, nevertheless the organization remained accountable to the male minister in charge. These were, and to varying degrees still are, the Australian Lutheran socioreligious expectations and anticipations of a woman as wife. At times, understandably, some women have walked a fine line, yet an inter-generational strength among the Australian Lutheran women has been the norm. Traditionally, women within this community have had a strong culture and cross-generational friendships.

In Australia, the winds of change blew during the mid-1950s. Margaret had left school when opportunities became generally available (and encouraged) for young women to enter the nursing and teaching professions, banks or secretarial fields. The War had been won; the population needed replenishing; the economy was booming; marriages at 17 or 18 years of age were almost the norm. In 1957, at the age of 20, Margaret married.

During the late 1970s, the Australian people elected a Federal Labour Government under the

leadership of Gough Whitlam and his university-educated wife, Margaret, a social worker by profession. Now, education was not only encouraged, but access became available to all through the opening of adult education centres (TAFE) with a diversity of interest courses at nominal fees. University tuition was free. Many women, denied educational opportunities during the Wars and Depression, took advantage of the opportunity. Margaret now attended several art classes with trained instructors, both within the city and in satellite centres. Thus,

The construction of mid-life in adolescent terms, as a similar crisis of identity and separation, ignores the reality of what has happened in the years between and tears up [her] history of love and of work. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 171)

Relationships and the Ethic of Caring

Margaret's primary focus is family and relationships. Her identity from young adolescence on, recognized in her single-mindedness in her choice of marriage and family as her profession, has been one of ongoing generativity. From adolescence on, one sees an active involvement and concern for the wellbeing of family and community across age levels. Consequently, *her crisis entering middle adulthood became one of conflictual values over caring responsibly*. It is my opinion that Margaret internally confronted a perceived spiritual betrayal by the theological academics of an institution she had assumed lived the values they advocated that their students follow. Disillusioned for a time, she courageously and reflectively discerned and validated her core values together with her personality, the Essence of her Self. But first, some preliminary background.

A Sense of Community

In 1982, Gilligan published her now classic work in which she differentiated between males' and females' mature ethical or moral codes. While, argues Gilligan, the traditional mature-male's ethic is one of following rules with a concern for justice and rights, an ethically mature woman is concerned with an ethic of caring and a concern for continuing connection, one's behavior responsive and responsible to both self and other. For Gilligan, ethically mature women regard a moral resolution one of conciliation and cooperation. By behaving

responsibly and responsively, hopefully no one gets hurt. I see Margaret's core value as being this care ethic, her application as widening her circles of interactive involvement, her motivation from adolescence onwards continuing generativity, and, in process, progressively identifying her ego integrity towards acquiring *her* uniquely life-experienced wisdom.

When reviewing Margaret's life from adolescence onwards, one sees relationships as Margaret's primary locus and focus. Pivotal, from young adulthood onward, as a wife, mother, and more recently, as a grandmother, is her family's wellbeing. Moreover, she and her siblings share friendship, meeting weekly over lunch. Her caring circle has widened in recent years. What currently seems to motivate Margaret are two interactive components: Margaret's honed, matured, and balanced self-concept, together with her strong sense of a spiritual self, is coupled with a maturing confidence acquired from the continuing support and respect received from her relationships (family and community). Within her town community, Margaret is nurturing others' wellbeing and enlarging their interests and friendship circles across the generations, enlarging social spaces through activity and conversation. Margaret merges into the surround. I believe Margaret's life encapsulates that "awareness that one grows not only by being one's self but also by participating in other selves, [which] is necessary if we are to move toward self-realization" (May, 1975, p. 12).

Spousal relationship

Margaret knows she has been fortunate. Within her traditional marriage, she has not experienced economic deprivation nor relationship-affective uncertainty. Nor, from her account, has her husband inhibited her community involvement or interests. I believe the self-assurance Margaret emanates in her quiet but enthusiastic manner rests partly upon her husband's respect, his unconditional positive regard for her worth, accomplishments and personality, and his kindnesses. As well, this couple's extended families (including respective parents) live(d) within a comfortable travel distance. Perhaps this proximity has been each spouse's comfort zone by enabling personal developmental continuity since birth.

Possibly, too, this intergenerational foundation has been this *couple's* motivational force. Margaret and her husband seem to have a genuine interest and concern for the wellbeing of individuals. People focused, their activities appear altruistically directed. As a result, within their relationship, while each may undertake a gender-appropriate role, or independently engage in an activity, these activities culminate in sharing the outcome. Consequently, their marriage, rather than a social contract, appears to be personal development *within* unity, mutually enhancing and encouraging each others' interests and gifts. At Margaret's family reunion, it is her husband who emcees (announces) and speaks on behalf of the descendents. Approximately 10 years later, while presumably each still grieving their son's loss, her husband requests her assistance at a young woman's funeral, a congregational member. Thus each engages the others' assistance, compassionately. Their relationship is not perfect. There *are* times, Margaret feels, when her husband "almost cares too much," inhibiting her achieving her full potential by being over-protective. As she says, this "can be restrictive." However, from Margaret's perspective his behavior is well intended.

Margaret

Her motivation appears to be one of nurturing others' wellbeing and interests from a perspective of self-security as a validated and valued individual. The thread of connection between Margaret and others has been ongoing. *It is her initial helplessness in a personal family crisis that causes Margaret grief and depression and awakens the active use of her artistic talent.* Retrieving her art interest, and later using it as her medium towards self-recovery, Margaret broadens her understanding and her community involvement across age groups and, in so doing, is following the compassionate path. This initially necessitates re-discovering and identifying the courage within herself, that courage that finds "the capacity to move ahead *in spite of despair*" (May, 1975, p. 3).

Anomie: Margaret's Developmental Challenge

In Margaret's case, it is not *her* personal catastrophe. It is their son's! She is in her early 40s

when their son, part way through his seminary training, has "a life-threatening accident," suffering a head injury that for a time seriously impairs his former intellectual capacity and motor skills.

It is my belief that Margaret's dedication and encouragement towards his well-being (spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical) during the traumatic years that follow has enabled him to assume an alternative profession and to lead an increasingly productive and respected life within his community. In any event, having resumed his studies, having completed a successful vicarage, and returned to the seminary, he was 6 months from graduation when informed he could not and would not graduate after all! This action appears to have been totally unexpected and unanticipated. It is now, in her early 50s, that Margaret crumbles inside.

Margaret's depression *could* have been an exhaustion reaction caused by an aftermath of over-concentration on their son's well-being to the detriment of her own. On the other hand, it could also as easily have been grief at their son's summary dismissal after all the rehabilitation he had undergone and the improvement he had shown. I feel it is the latter, that Margaret, in grieving for her son's loss of his Dream, internally shatters for a time. *Margaret's crisis appears to be a betrayal of a core value; her trust in the honour and integrity of an institution (its professionals) is breached.* After all the commendation following his accident and recovery, now, shortly before ordination, they change their minds. As she said, "After a long convalescence, our son successfully completed his vicarage and resumed his seminary studies. Then, 6 months short of graduating into the ministry, he was told he was unsuitable after all!" Did Margaret wonder why these officials left this decision so late? Their decision not only impacted on their son, but his family, church and community.

Margaret appears to have internalized both her son's and her own devastation. As she said, she quietly withdrew while continuing her routine, "she never talked about it." Her husband

and family, it seems, respected her space, *her* way of handling their son's crisis. In any event, this anomic experience "reduced [her] confidence a lot." Yet Margaret took a choice. She decisively honed her strengths of patience, courage, and understanding she had given their son by reflectively applying these qualities to her self.

Coping and Surviving Towards Ultimately Thriving

Coping. On the surface, as she said, Margaret continued her routine activities. In a telephone conversation, Margaret mentioned that sometimes she walked down the street in dark glasses thinking people could not see her. Until one day, while in the newsagent's shop, she overheard the owner talking about "dealing with difficult people." Thinking it was *she* he was referring to, she decided, "That's it! I won't let people see me when I'm like this in the future, and I'll snap out of it!" Thus began, as she said, "the uphill climb." She was 52 years old then. This climb took approximately 5 years.

Uncovering the heart means uncovering the vital center of the self. This is a move towards the unknown, even though it is a part of our own selves that we are uncovering. The heart, symbolically, is the organ of feeling and intuition. The death of the heart is a real danger. (Barron, Montori, & Barron, Eds., 1997, p. 25)

Surviving. Margaret reached her decision independently through introspection and self-determination, giving herself her dignity and integrity to resolve a potentially devastating crisis. Hers was an isolated journey. When life overwhelmed her, she shrank into a small shell of truth much like an oyster creating a pearl within itself. She deliberated, selected, and retrieved a long-wished-for-activity and concentrated on her own wellness. When ready *she* returned to her community affectively and intellectually. *How* did she do this? *What* were some processes? *Why*, once the depression began lifting, did it shift quickly at the end?

Routine activities helped her. Margaret "just tried to keep doing the things [she] was doing." During the early years of her son's ordeal, she had spoken with her doctor who, it appears, had rather brusquely dismissed her emotional state, saying her reaction was normal. After that, as Margaret said, she sought no help from the professionals. Self-contained by nature,

she used three tools: her intuition, her intellect, and her spiritual inner resources (her faith).

There were also *two growth enablers*. When she sought help for her depression from her doctor, he appears to have dismissed it with an, "Oh, that's normal." One can view her doctor's comments from another perspective. It can be argued that he encouraged her growth by deliberately not giving her advice, answers, or offering her medication. Confronting her situation, head on, Margaret heeded and attended to her intuitive voice. Then, some years later, she received a threat to her community identity and dignity when she overheard a conversation in the town newsagent's shop, a conversation about "dealing with difficult people." She thought the comment directed at her. What did Margaret do?

Margaret took charge of her life, and applied her own therapy by developing her artistic skills and continuing her journal writing. Primarily, Margaret continued the process begun while sitting with her son in the hospital room almost 10 years earlier. She accessed her body's reactions through her hand to pen and brush. Her use of intellect and thought processes in application (pen, brush) together with her affective self—"I started writing *more* about how I was feeling about this"—shortened her process. Margaret used *all* of her body's six senses, utilizing all of its resources, thus combining logic and affect. This process short-circuited the pain and forged growth. By concretizing her inner turmoil, visually transferring it from within to the observed, the seen (art and language), she focused her Self psychologically (intellectually, aesthetically and *spiritually*).

Within community, Margaret was her own therapist. Whereas she had written her feelings as she sat in that hospital room, her writing now focused *her* mind-scattered pain and turmoil. Whereas previously she had sketched her son's face as he lay in that hospital bed, she now focused *her* confusion by painting a lillium from her garden for one daughter. When she *did* need to share her anxiety with another person, she chose a neutral ear, her minister's. He was her spiritual safety net as her art focused her towards her Essence of Self. Once she selected for herself this aesthetic medium and *used* it, her depression began to shift, slowly

at first, until in the final stages, it lifted within a "couple of weeks." Margaret had accessed the key and opened the door to her psychic centre. But this process did not happen in a vacuum. There were significant others involved.

Thriving: a catalyst experience. As mentioned, Margaret was 52 years of age when she began her journey towards self-recovery and inadvertently rediscovered her Essence of Self. Searching for some activity to lift her out of her depression, to retrieve her joy of life, *Margaret selected what she always had wanted to do.* She enrolled in an adult painting class, the medium water-colors. Significantly, she also relaxed. Picking up her brush in that first class, she said, "I'll never be good at this, so I will just enjoy myself." Personally non-threatened, Margaret found not only did she enjoy this activity, but that she had a talent others seemed to appreciate.

One woman made a significant contribution. An instructor, this woman as a visiting "artist-in-residence," was influential in Margaret's recovery. In view of Margaret's faith in the spiritual process and her reliance on the personal integrity of her minister, perhaps the fact that her instructor also happened to be a minister's wife may have had some significance. In any event, as Margaret immersed herself in the activity and enjoyment, it was this artist who convinced the class to use its talents, "even if just on birthday cards." This class seems to have been Margaret's turning point. From that moment on, Margaret moved from her mindset of practical function and service towards valuing and validating her artistic ability as also of some practical value. Two water-color paintings followed, one for each daughter. Then within a few years, after silk-screen cards, Margaret designed two large church banners, highlighting the two high points of a Christian festival, Christmas (birth) and the Easter resurrection (rebirth). In so doing, unpremeditatedly I believe, Margaret aesthetically visualized her recent life experiences and her own movement from grief and loss to a renewal of spirit that now encompassed her creative pursuits. She seems to have answered in the affirmative the question, "Suppose the apprehension of beauty is itself a way to truth?" (May, 1975, viii). She also opened up her community (church and town) by organizing

various creative venues, and by including a creche, enabling an intergenerational mix.

And Margaret practised *Self care*. "In a lot of ways this art has helped me in a time of stress. It has helped me work through things." Margaret's depression lifted very quickly once she decided "that's it," thought carefully about what she wanted to do, how she could move herself out of this situation, and then picked up her brush. She became immersed in an inner component of her Self, uncontaminated by the negatives of socialization experiences, others' verbal, visual and silent criticisms. She chose what she had enjoyed watching her mother do and what she herself had experienced encouragement and admiration for. Margaret captured *her* turning point on canvas by painting a bloom from her garden as a gift for one daughter. Many an Australian woman's flower garden is frequently her therapeutic solace, her contemplative-self time, and her introspective time out.

Social Spaces: the Significance of a Community

Every person needs a trustworthy community to maintain psychological equilibrium. Margaret has that community, within her family, her church and the town. It can be seen that, throughout her ordeal and outcome, she received respect, support, encouragement and finally, admiration. Had she experienced shunning, professional therapy might have been necessary. As it was, there is no indication of undermining silences, behind-the-scenes gossip, or prying. To the contrary, within the continuity of relationships forged through the years, friendships are noticeable in the respectfully watchful silence and spatial distance enabling her recovery.

During this process, a community's quiet sensitivity is sufficiently therapeutic so that, when Margaret overhears a conversation, perceives it as applying to herself, and becomes proactive in caregiving towards herself, her social spaces and experiences widen as members of the community assist in the restoration of her self-confidence. Consequently, one growth-marker has been Margaret's identifying and *naming* herself as an organizer and leader. As one member of the community commented, "Margaret has really come out of her shell."

Equally as essential, though, towards developing one's compassionate understanding, is accepting another's leadership, in turn *actively* participating and cooperating in various activities. This Margaret does.

Psychic Capital Enabling Ego Integrity

From childhood, Margaret carried the memory of winning an art contest, how it felt, how others reacted. At a turning point in a personal crisis, remembering how she felt at that time, she recalled three key factors in success: "enjoyment, encouragement, and praise." Margaret then identified her essential Essence of Self as a nurturer. Additionally, both she and her community accept her personality style, her self-containment, her ethic of caring, and her unassuming organizational ability and leadership-style. Consequently, one senses Margaret's security within her relationships. This security is further enhanced by her community's appreciation of her recent personal accomplishments. *Not having received overly negative reactions she continues to test her artistic limits.*

For Margaret, her faith is also an essential component. In crisis, from this basis of spiritual depth, she rediscovers her inner strength and moves beyond despair. Currently, she is nurturing her newfound identity, her strength rediscovered in her artistic ability. As she related, "I'm careful and a bit tough, a bit wary of others' input in case I don't like it."

Stepping on her Progress Stones

Margaret is not afraid of risking and challenging a perceived obstacle, nor of using her initiative. Her question, "What is the point of being brilliant because you never will be?" pushes her into resuming her art with much more intent and deliberation, as, earlier, perceiving she lacked writing skills, she had begun a diary. Thus, utilizing both the aesthetic and intellectual medium, obstacles become challenges. Margaret thrives on challenge. While she initially *may* have perceived some loss to her self-image in lacking a lengthy formal education, she appears to have mentally erased that obstacle.

Relationship-oriented, and intuitive, Margaret uses life experiences as her classroom. There is also an absence of blaming. Appreciating the value of individual lives, she recalls with warranted self-satisfaction her accomplishment in recommending, organizing and seeing-to-completion her family-history text. Typically, she involves others so in turn expands their experiences, knowledge and expertise, and gives others credit where it is due. One can imagine Margaret immersing herself historically within her family of origin, her roots, and uncovering components of herself together with the significance of each life when placed in its sociohistorical context. Using her initiative, her creativity and imagination, she selects a unique format and succeeds as a researcher, interviewer, statistician and writer.

Essence of a Self

And because women's sense of integrity appears to be entwined with an ethic of care, so that to see themselves as women is to see themselves in a relationship of connection, the major transitions in women's lives would seem to involve changes in the understanding of care. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 171)

Gilligan (1982) is of the opinion that this transition requires a shift in perspective from an ulterior motive of wishing to be accepted and approved of to one of genuinely considering another's well-being—in other words, moving beyond a socioculturally prescribed and gendered role-play (p. 171). Possibly so. But I believe Margaret's *core* value is a genuine ethic of caring responsibly and responsively. It is my opinion, therefore, that Margaret's *anomie* and temporary withdrawal during her early 50s involved wrestling with and understanding that perhaps “pleasing” and “approval” in this instance applied to a *male* institutional lack of accountability surrounding those very values they emphasized—that identical *ethic* of caring.

Spanning a period of approximately 15 years, from her son's accident to her renewed and much enlarged and more widely-encompassing community involvement, Margaret hones and refines her core values, first by direct involvement in her son's convalescence, then during the last 5 years, what becomes *her* personal crisis. Courageously, Margaret moves

beyond her crisis of identity in generativity and away from possible ego despair by channelling a previously under-developed talent toward her own healing. In coming to an understanding, Margaret achieves her ego integrity with her generativity and identity intact as she progressively involves herself in family and community once more. Of equally crucial importance in this process is others' acceptance and support. Encouraged, Margaret now incorporates her newfound ego integrity into her community. By not experiencing sociocultural devaluation, but ongoing validation, Margaret's story correspondingly shows a community's generativity in cooperation and in turn its identifying the ethic of caring. For those involved, then,

The truths of relationship . . . return in the rediscovery of connection, in the realization that self and other are interdependent and that life, however valuable in itself, can only be sustained in relationships. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 127)

The transition successfully negotiated, her life once more focused, Margaret, as an organiser and a leader, is using her skills and acquired knowledge. Currently, her creative and leadership abilities, her family and community commitments, continue to evolve. For Margaret, "life is really bubbling along."

FENELEE

From my earliest years I always wanted to be an artist. I loved to paint and I loved the smell of the paint. I grew up on an Prairie farm and I remember one summer day after the rain carrying home marvellous gumbo soil from one of our hills and shaping and sculpting it. Of course, I didn't know anything about sculpting at that age.

I went to a rural school, and grew up in a home where we didn't have any kind of paintings on the walls or anything like that at all. One of my earliest memories was wanting paints for Christmas and getting them and I shall always remember how they smelled—that was so exciting! As I got older, even though I wanted to be an artist, I began to realise that that wasn't a very practical thing to want to do because, well, what kind of livelihood did artists really make, and what kind of contributions did they really make to everybody's life?

I had a hard time in my teenage years because I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life and art didn't seem to really be feasible. I remember when I was a teenager riding

in the car with my dad and at one point saying, "You know, I really think I've got to do this art thing, I really think I have to and I think I'm going to." And I remember his reply: "There's a lot more to art than painting pictures you know." So I didn't pursue my art, my dream, I got on with real life. However, I've often thought about that conversation, and I do think that in my youth, and since, art has been a kind of lover if you like. I've travelled on many different kinds of journeys but I've always had a little rendezvous with that lover at some point, even if a great deal of time passes without any real connection at all.

I always had a hankering that I wanted to pursue art more and actually I did get my BFA from the Fine Arts Department at the University when in my 30s. I was very proud of that because they only accepted a limited number of people and I was accepted on the basis of a portfolio and an interview for what I considered my hobby. When I decided I wanted to pursue a University Degree in Fine Arts, I was advised by the counsellor that my aptitude was not in that area. The counsellor suggested I should do something like law because that was more the kind of mind and language I had. But I wanted my art so I ignored the advice.

I didn't pursue it as a profession. Shortly before I turned 18, I entered a convent and became a Sister. The 6-1/2 year training period was very intensive. I entered a teaching order. As I didn't want to teach, I was sent to NAIT and SAIT for apprenticeship classes in cooking and sewing. This led eventually to being the seamstress and supervisor of maintenance. This included overseeing the cooking and purchasing. However, I continued to find ways to use my artistic skill and I took courses during my 20s. I remember painting a huge mural of a cityscape on a convent wall during this time. Actually I don't know where I got all the energy for all the things I did during those years—I did an incredible amount.

The turning point came when I got to know this dear old priest and got involved in some media work—specifically, in photography. Two years later he asked me to work for him in the newly created field of television and electronic media. That was in 1973. When I said yes, he then told me he'd asked my Superior but that she had refused my being a part of this new endeavour. I had not heard anything about it! I then had a huge tug-of-war with my Superiors because of my capabilities in so many areas. They didn't want to lose me because they relied on me in the Community to keep all the "glue" together. I recall suggesting they involve interested lay people as was then being recommended. They needed jobs. I could keep an eye on things. We could afford it. Then I was reminded that I didn't have a car, so how would it be possible? I replied that all I'd need would be a few hundred dollars and I would buy one. So I did. I got the money, my brother helped me buy an old car. I even gave driving lessons to a whole slue of Sisters at one point. That was the kind of person I was and probably still am, at least I hope so. I was quite different from many of the women in our Community.

I realised there was little opportunity for me to use my artistic talents within the Community, then, or in the future. I also knew before entering this media field that I didn't know anything about television. I would have to start at the bottom, all that nitty-gritty work. I

also knew that within this new field there would be little opportunity for me to focus on, or express, my form of art, but looking back, I think perhaps I may have decided to enter this Religious Education media field because it would be recognizable, acceptable, and approved of. I worked part-time the first year because I had a lot of commitments and was taking art courses that I couldn't or didn't want to abandon. At that point I was really enjoying an etching class, interacting with other artists, seeing their work, and visiting their homes.

Once my art courses were over, I began working full-time and continued in this field for approximately 25 years. I gave up all of my art to work exclusively in television. While working full-time, I took media-related courses in the evenings or rearranged my work schedule to accommodate day classes. This media work was really, really hard and extremely precise—technically, in the language used, and in the timing. I didn't then have the mindset for video technology, which, of course, was more difficult than today. In those days we didn't have cassette players, nor VCRs. It was all reel-to-reel and black and white. Only the large recording studios had colour. I worked very, very hard and gradually it became easier and easier. My courses helped, both at Ryerson in Broadcast Television and in my home city. A year after beginning this work full-time, I entered my BFA programme, specializing in black-and-white photography.

At this same time, there was a whole lot of questioning going on in the Catholic church. I think it was a reflection of the world in general. We were coming out of the hippie era and there were still a lot of questions. There were also a lot of structural changes within the church. These changes really made me look more deeply at who I was, what I was trying to do with my life and what it meant for me to live fully as a Christian woman—to sort out what was convention or tradition from that which was really authentic for me. We had a lot of sensitivity sessions within my Religious Community and it was from within this milieu that I began to question what previously I had accepted. You see, the Catholic expectancy for a Sister was that once called by God to this service, one gave up the world, which included parents and family members. One sacrificed everything. One went out into the community, but it was still considered tainted—one went out to do good and returned to the enclosure. Part of my spiritual development was to subject myself, to give up every personal ability or inclination. I would give generously of myself, but I should not seek personal preferences or opportunities. It was that whole notion of blind obedience, all that mentality. Growing up in a Catholic household, I had had a smattering of it before I entered Religious life, but within the Religious life there was a huge dose of it. Consequently, for many, many years I didn't really like the Religious life but at the same time I felt obligated because I didn't have a good reason to leave. So I think my personal story about submerging my own talents and interests are very much a part of my spirituality and certainly were very much a part of my spirituality at that time. The vow of obedience was gigantic. You were to empty yourself of every desire and inclination and obey your Superior, unquestioningly.

During the 1970s there were changes. Now we could use our commonsense. We could make

some of the decisions. I began to reflect upon what I could change, how I could alter my way of life and decided on the television and communications area, eventually becoming the key person in the office because of my knowledge and expertise. Initially I still tried to do a little art in my private life, on my terms. But then after a year at the Communications Centre I packed everything away in boxes—my paints, my brushes—because not only was there less time while concentrating on my new job, but also I was one of the people assigned to live in an experimental Community. Three of us elected to take care of a house together while the family was on sabbatical.

It was tough to get permission. It was tough to set everything up because we had to have an incredible amount of supervision and accountability. We extended our one-year experimental Community for another year, during which time I was working in television and taking media courses. At that time, there was good, ongoing dialogue within my Religious Community as many of the Sisters were interested in what we were doing. I became a counsellor for the Sisters and the Province at large. I was also doing little things in the art line—a poster, designing book covers, a headstone. Life was fun and really exciting. I was very involved and very busy.

However, unexpectedly, our Community did an about face and said there would be no more experimental Communities; we were to return to the Mother House. That was a really major crisis for me. There was to be no further dialogue, questioning or discussions. We three faced the same dilemma, so we sat down and decided that we each had to discern a solution to this ultimatum for ourselves. We each brought back our personal response and it was at that point that I determined in all conscience I could not return to the Mother House as it would be a death for me personally. While I could understand another's decision, for me it would not work! I realise now not once did I even contemplate returning. I knew most certainly that if I moved back, I would commit a kind of suicide of my soul, of my spirit, and I can remember vividly imagining myself as I grew older becoming a bland, careful, insipid, cautious, unadventurous, lacking-in-opinion-and-purpose kind of woman. I just cringed at the thought of that. I just couldn't, I couldn't accept that!

It was very frightening at the time as I didn't know anything about such things as health care, funerals, and taxation. In Community all that is taken care of—even in death one is not alone. You never have to worry about your old age. I was also on a really poor church salary. But, I was young so I thought I would figure it out; we'd make it work. I did though, have a lot of grief and a lot of anger at the Community, especially towards the Superior for giving us this ultimatum. It was very hard, really hard! It took me several years to get over it, but there were two good experiences that resulted. We discovered a young, non-traditional, controversial, somewhat frowned upon contemporary Community. And the two women I was living in Community with made the same decision. So we said, "Well then, let's just continue living in Community together." And we did. It was very hard, we didn't have the financial resources, and we wanted to buy a house. But we managed; we got through it. I had begun my Fine Arts program full-time in the communications field. Personally, I was

also in turmoil and determinedly searching. Around this time, too, I also got involved with a Christian Theatre Group. This involvement continued for many years, culminating in my being on their Board of Directors. I was doing everything imaginable under the sun and I was loving it; I was interested in it, it was enjoyable and there wasn't enough time. I immersed myself into the Fine Arts programme, keeping my responsibility to media at the same time. As my media expertise grew, so did the demands on my time and consequently I sacrificed the personal things, one being art. I sacrificed a lot of personal things. In the end, I hardly had a life outside of media. I can really understand it when you hear media types say they live and eat and breathe their work, that that's all they have time for, for that was me!

Gradually I did less and less art. Finally, in my early 40s, I gave away all my equipment—my paints, my brushes, and my easel. It was a wrenching. I remember feeling I was doing something a bit final, yet I had reached the conclusion that I just didn't have time in my life for it, that I had to do some radical cleaning. I had boxes and boxes of canvases, frames and everything else. I remember thinking, "Well, I'll give it up. And who knows, I'll do it when I retire." But I kept hoping in the back of my mind that I'd do something with it. I also said to myself, "It will be very interesting when you finally take up art again because you have been shaped very highly by television now. Your visual sense, your visual literacy has been highly shaped, so what kind of imaging will you be doing when you finally actually do fine art?" It was the beginning and end of art, as I then knew it.

I cannot do art and other things. While I am now trying to get back into art, I am having the most terrible time. Why am I not doing it? I need isolation and few demands on my time. Since the Communications Centre closed down and I lost my job in television entirely, I have been closing down, I have been withdrawing. Some of that has been grieving the abrupt closure, a closure that I was non-participatory in, but I have also withdrawn because I want to do my art. I would withdraw even more if I could. Sometimes I feel very imposed upon. But then, that may be because I am a first-born in a large family. I was shaped with this sense of responsibility. I don't want to blame anybody, but I recognize that as long as people keep asking, I will keep giving—although I'm not giving quite as much on request as I used to. I am coming to understand to what degree I can continue relating to people while working on my art as I feel compelled to do. At this point, I have created a space in my large room but it is not enough. I still have distractions.

However, we are moving to our lake and are renovating. I am drafting the design and I am really enjoying doing it. At the moment I am creating a large studio space, an area that isn't so conveniently accessible to others. Meanwhile, I am realising that there will always be good reasons for not doing what I feel is the very core of my being. I am sure this core shapes my unique spirit, and its ramifications are immense in terms of the person I am. I want to give expression to that! I'm very, very good at postponing—now it is the design, renovation and building at the lake. I know some artistic-type people who can work on a number of things at once, but I am not that kind of an artist, that kind of a person. I can

understand Gauguin's need to get away, although I disliked him so much for abandoning his family and job, but I can understand that he had to leave everything behind him. I would like to become somewhat like Georgia O'Keeffe, doing nothing else but attending to either sitting and looking or actually working with charcoal or with paint. I would almost find writing easier—and I'm a fair writer as well. At the moment I am working on special greeting cards. Recently, I realized I was bringing all the energy of the artist to doing these. In retrospect I realized these cards are design, not art, yet I was making this designing a formidable task, and design, for me while quite enjoyable, doesn't require the same kind of immersion that art does.

As the eldest child of a large family I was shaped to take responsibility, to keep a certain position. As the oldest child, I looked after my brothers and sisters when they were little children and they tend to still look to me as someone they can always call on. But I am becoming more efficient at doing less. I now can go away for long periods from my family and not feel guilty. I guess I'm trying to balance a normal, regular life against the life that I suspect or feel art would impose on me should I give myself totally to it.

I feel development in art is a bit like aging. I have always made a distinction between pretty art and art as a real expression of some inner seeing or inner experience. Even though I respect and value people who create the pretty art, yet the idea I've got about art is as an expression of an Inner Seeing. Inner seeing for me means a way of life. I will be painting who I am. And you can't simply close the door and paint for an hour and then come out again or paint for two or three hours at a time. At least I imagine that's impossible unless and until you become so imbued with it to the point that, like a Contemplative, you breathe it, and then of course you can do everything and anything because you are doing everything and anything with that same spirit.

Do you know, I even went through a stage when I felt I had to change and get away from everything so profoundly that I even wanted to change all the clothes I wore. I wanted to wear flowing things. I went so far as to buy some fabric, sew a few seams and then my parents became more demanding because of their health and their ages. Honestly, putting things on hold is a big pastime.

So now, I am seeing it as simply a struggle with time. Perhaps I'm not very adept at translating whatever I do into art. But right now I seem to need a lot of time to just do nothing. And right now I've got different kinds of pressures on me—letters, ironing, promises to keep. Will I ever get to the point where I don't have this, that and the other thing? That's my dilemma and that's my stress! That's where I am! I promised myself I'd retire at 57 years and do art. I would do art! So I'd better get serious about it if I don't want to go to my grave being plagued by it. I am now closer than I've ever been before. I should have nothing to stop me now. I just have to build a space for myself. And that's what I'm doing right now. I also know that once I begin, I will feel so full of life that it will be just amazing.

The harmony and emergence of one's own life seems to come from the increasing capacity to find in the world that which also obtains within the depths of one's own being. (Moustakas, 1967, p. 134)

Overview

It appears that Fenebee intuitively and unconsciously met her Essence of Self as a young girl when she found the gumbo clay. She recalls how passionately she experienced the sensation of carrying the clay home and molding it as she wished, spurred on by her creative energy and her feeling of wellbeing. This creative energy has assisted her in each choice made or direction taken. This intuitive process, her strength and core, seems to be determinedly moving Fenebee towards encapsulating her life in some form on canvas.

Born in 1939, The Great Depression merging into a Second World War, Fenebee's childhood and adolescence were spent on a farm in rural Alberta. One can imagine the stark simplicity, daily routine, and perhaps even hardship, not only on the homestead, but within that relatively poor farm community; it is conceivable that the education received in art and music at the local school was minimal, or nonexistent, perceived as having little or no cultural value. Can one assume, given the absence of secular paintings in her childhood home, that perhaps Fenebee relied upon religious imagery, her life experiences, and imagination, to paint her inner world using her mind's eye, and that this foundation will ultimately influence *how* she paints?

I first met Fenebee in the early 1990s. What I recall about that first introduction is her eyes. While she is a rather reserved, gentle and unassumingly warm person (as I was to discover), my initial memory is of eyes that seemed incisively to absorb her surroundings into herself. I drove to the new renovations-in-progress house on the lake to review the interview. Fenebee's house design is striking. She and her friend live in this home, each occupying space and lighting, compass direction and sunshine as selected for her particular work and interest. One will write; one will paint. Fenebee wishes finally to become an acknowledged

artist—this time realizing her childhood dream and adolescent request—she *will* and she *shall* paint!

The to-be-and-becoming studio has large windows looking to the outside bird life, lake, and garden, yet is tucked away downstairs, in a far corner. As she said in her interview, it is harder to access and engenders solitude. On the main level, a large glass-protected railed balcony overlooks the lake, bird life, homes and activities in the distance across the lake while southwards the eye is drawn by the water's curve to any boating activity appearing and disappearing. We had our afternoon coffee there on a gloriously sunny afternoon, our conversations periodically halted by yet another species of bird, yet another melody catching our attention. This is now the primary living space of Fenebee's daily lifeworld. What have been some of the processes and life meanderings that have brought Fenebee to this point in her life?

Fenebee's Experiences of *Anomie* in Identity Foreclosure

Threading Fenebee's life one sees periodic dichotomy and resolvment between religious duty versus personal fulfilment, practicality versus art as a viable economic possibility, and "real life" work versus the aesthetics of art as work (a motif of her life experiences, values, observations and concerns). *These appear to have been Fenebee's struggles: her accountability to her Religious duty (initiated in by her Superior and Community when barely 18 to the age of 25) and her accountability to her Essence of Self, her art.*

Her youth and young adulthood to the age of approximately 25, as well-intentioned as it may have been, was systematically encouraged towards passivity and acquiescent dependence. Entering a Convent, initially her forming Self (barely 18 years old) was arduously subjected to intensive indoctrination, with little to no opportunity for questioning or critique. The theology was infallible, her Superiors were the experts and after an intensive year of study, a 5-year period of checks and balances followed—Fenebee subjected to an annual character adaptability review. Throughout this period, possibly to keep a balanced perspective as well

as her energy source, Fenebee personally interpreted and adapted to the Convent lifestyle by taking art courses and applying what she learnt when possible. While it could be argued that Fenebee's identity was earlier subsumed, yet she has continued to perceive herself as an artist in whatever she is pursuing, ever revising this image as she moves closer to her centre, where she stands presently.

A crisis point. At the age of 55, Fenebee experienced an anomic crisis of identity and integrity when without forewarning her Department (her career of almost 25 years) was dismantled. At times she must have felt depressed, scattered in focus, confused about her self-concept, experiencing a lowering of self-esteem as she reassessed her life towards future potentialities and contribution. *Fenebee's challenge then became one of role diffusion, which Erikson explains as "a loss of center and a dispersion" (1968, p. 212).* Courageously, Fenebee has withdrawn into comparative isolation and what appears to be an inner dialogue between her intuitive and logical components, her body in abeyance, the issue, it seems, being how to synchronize her art and her Religious cultural identity toward a personal and socio-religious recognition and acceptance of *who essentially Fenebee is* as an artist. *Will she challenge her father's words of her adolescent years and risk self-exposure by acting upon her conviction of that time? Could it be that she must identify and capture on canvas the Essence of her Self by interweaving her artistic freedom and her spiritual values? Currently, by acknowledging her loss and selecting her activities, her body appears to be encouraging her practical mind and her creative intuitive modes of action towards wholeness.*

Two issues, perhaps understandably, seem to be causing Fenebee apprehension. Can she paint that "Inner Seeing?" and, how can she modify her altruistic nature, especially her internalized sense of service? Certainly, throughout her life Fenebee has shown both resiliency and a strength of character. While she foreclosed her identity as an adolescent (or it was foreclosed on her behalf), she did not appear to have argued, nor did she choose marriage and motherhood. Instead, she pursued the most highly regarded route for women of her faith community. She chose Convent life, in some respects as single-mindedly focused

as an artist's life. Now she faces as difficult a choice.

To retrieve what has been shaped away from one's Essence of Self requires introspective courage, perseverance, persistence and possibly social displacement for a time. But this task is essential if to continue one's life journey towards personal integrity and wisdom rather than disillusionment (Jung, 1976; Erikson, 1963). For a woman, this may necessitate a shift from enhancement of others' unique talents and gifts towards one's own. It is necessary to challenge the impediment to one's middle-life growth. The difficulty at times is to find the access route to one's voice and one's energy core. Fenebee is involved in this process, perhaps confronting her dilemma of how to balance the compliance and accommodation of her Religious training with the audacity and assertiveness of her artist Self that has kept on making a gremlin-like appearance at regularly significant times in her life. What may be some issues?

Poverty, practicality, and perseverance: poverty. Poverty enervates one's affect, mind, and body. One can imagine the expected and assumed responsibilities Fenebee carried as an eldest girl-child such as minding her siblings and the chores. Yet her parents gave her the gift of hope in a paintbox.

Fenebee's Community experiences were similar. The significant influences that impacted the degree of Fenebee's fulfilment of her dream, her self-fulfilment as an artist (her spiritually aesthetic and artistically-sensitive Self), were also her sociocultural and socioreligious experiencing world.

Practicality in "blind obedience." Possibly one of the most difficult challenges Fenebee is confronting is overturning her internalised myth that art is not the "real world," seemingly having little functional value and lacking in practicality.

Her values until the 1970s (when the Religious were encouraged to reflect, debate, and

conscientize), were honed towards "all that mentality" as she phrased it, towards unquestioned "blind obedience." Worse, during the formative young-adult years of her 20s, Fenebee's talents were dispersed as Convent housekeeping duties took precedence. Fenebee had entered a primarily teaching Community. She did *not* want to teach, but as she said, there were few opportunities for an artist within that environment. While the Convent did not discourage her, Fenebee adapted and accommodated—with few other options. She continued her role of eldest child, her shaped-identity substitute of the responsible, practical one, using her artistic skills where she could. Perhaps not surprisingly, she soon discovered that this Religious-disciplined lifestyle was not to her liking. There was little to no outlet for her artistic talents and she couldn't find a reasonable excuse for leaving—quite a developmental dilemma.

Perseverance: the tenacity of creativity. When Fenebee chose Convent life, perhaps she felt within those confines her art would be respected. Perhaps she wanted her art rather than motherhood. She may have chosen the prestige and safety of socioreligious respect, recognition, admiration and reward. Perhaps unconsciously Fenebee chose this spiritual direction as the foundation of her art. Whatever the rationale, Fenebee followed her calling, either immersing her spirituality in her art momentarily or by living her life creatively as a professional Religious person.

As one can see, once Fenebee realized her life and future were to be constructed towards some Superior's ideology, Fenebee sought creative ways to maintain her individuality and uniqueness of spirit. She found ways to use her art to balance the tedium of Convent duties. Art courses provided the momentum for her NAIT and SAIT coursework in cooking and sewing, the outcome revealing. Fenebee painted a large wall mural, choosing as her subject a contemporary cityscape, a particularly striking life landscape to select given the attitude within the Convent at that time of the world as "tainted," the Sisters returning at day's end to a purified "enclosure." Intuitively, perhaps, Fenebee was rebelling against this concept while being ritualized into passive acceptance of duty. Undaunted, Fenebee continued to

explore her heart, following her intuitive voice. At the age of 34, she defied her Superior and accepted an elderly priest's invitation to work in a new area of Religious Education, Television and Media.

Heeding One's Culture: Socioreligious Cultural Change

In 1969-70 (and continuing), the Catholic church together with some Protestant segments institutionally set out on a soul-searching quest in reaction to perceived world-wide sociocultural moral and gender crises. Congregational members were the enablers. The professionals became concerned. *How* the various Christian churches' policies, procedures and practices would incorporate these changes while maintaining the moral powerbase was at issue, women's and minorities' alternate voices a concern (e.g., Freire, 1970; Gutiérrez, 1984; Hall, 1990; Lerner, 1993; Schneiders, 1986; Tribble, 1985). Fenebee chose to become actively engaged in this change process.

Intuition and logic: personality as affect. In 1970, Fenebee turned 30. During the following decade, traditional socioreligious values were undergoing scrutiny and, within some groups, a renaissance. Relationships and community interaction were explored using sensitivity sessions. During this time Fenebee also became both her Convent Community's and Provincial counsellor. Simultaneously, Fenebee continued her various art courses, thus keeping in contact with one of the most dynamic mediums and some of the most intuitively intense people, artists as a group. Fenebee's religious-spiritual lifeworld seems firmly interwoven and underpinned by her artistic-aesthetic "dabblings."

Intuitive action. In her early 30s, during this critical time of upheaval she, members of her Community, and her Church's laypeople were experiencing, Fenebee moved in three creatively developmental directions. She began her television and media work; the University Fine Arts Department accepted her portfolio; and she (and two Sisters) left her Convent enclave, moving into an "experimental Community."

Then unbeknown to Fenebee, *her challenge and process would become a retrieval of her artistic talent, and with it her Essence of Self—her identity and integrity on her terms.* The pivotal point was taking this opportunity in 1974, leaving the Mother House to experiment and explore a different concept of living one's life as a Religious. This time period seems to have initiated the *selecting* of paints for her artist's palette. She could not paint if on a spiritual quest, nor if involved at a grassroots level in media. Ultimately, each area would play a part in defining her Essence of Self to her conscious mirroring of that Self.

Two years later, in 1976, Fenebee defied an ultimatum to return to the Convent and forego further exploratory dialogue and issues debates. She left the Convent enclosure permanently. Her explanation is significant. She felt she "would commit a kind of suicide of soul and spirit" and visualized herself in her older years as "a bland, insipid, cautious, unadventurous, lacking in opinion and purpose woman." She was 37 years old.

Perceiving it as economically high risk, her decision involved a complete "re-directing of her art." She sacrificed her painting. Rather than her art now blossoming, she "gave it all away." Instead, she faced three fears: possible Religious isolation, a pathfinding media field, and economic vulnerability.

Logical adaptation: deferring artistic gratification. By not moving back into the Convent Fenebee perhaps took an iconoclastic stand within herself. Fenebee compromised, immersing herself wholeheartedly into her work, using her courses towards excellence in that area as the acceptable "non-artistic" practical career route of the moment. For the moment she would involve herself in *design*. Then, when 40 years old, she somewhat resignedly gave away her art supplies, paints, and easel! Seemingly, while she reflected and discerned her spiritual self, her artistic aesthetic self waited in abeyance in one of the wings while another "actor" took the stage.

The Flow of Creativity: Following Imaginative Pathways

Yet does that mean one never paints again? Not necessarily. In Fenebee's case, multiple techniques have been acquired, internalized and absorbed. Perhaps her intuition (heart) is now conversing with intellect (logic). Perhaps, meanwhile, her body is in abeyance, seemingly dormant, while continuing in daily routine. As Fenebee commented nearing the end of our interview, "I imagine at least, perhaps, until you become very imbued with [art] to the point where like a contemplative you *breathe* it, and then of course you can do anything and everything because you are doing everything and anything with that same spirit."

Within many long-established, historically conservative and traditionally oriented religious communities, an artist may be viewed as somewhat beyond the pale. Could it be that Fenebee's true identity of artist must now turn a page, beginning the next chapter of her life, this time incorporating her religious-spiritual belief system in her actualized art medium, her painting? Trust in her ability seems the essential prime ingredient, that psychic or soul risking that endures the outcome. It is the ultimate in living as art. One is evolving a self, in process, the outcome unseen. The emotions are of trust and the courage of hope, the logic is in the application of industry.

Altruism, art and the spiritual as one Self. So Fenebee packed away the painting segment of her art in 1974 when she moved out of the Main House and into a new contemporary community. She *did* intend to return to it but, finally in 1976, as mentioned, she gave her art supplies away. Once again, more important activities—both economic and spiritual crises of value—took precedence.

Yet her peopled world included artists (whose homes and art she experienced during her time in Fine Arts), and theatre (actors she became involved with once in the television media). Perhaps Fenebee was getting to know dimensions of her Self through these associations, that Self apart from her Religious associates (her public and her internalized

personal Religious image).

Spiritually fine-tuned, once again she intuited her way but this time her logic became uppermost. Her media job involved learning precise skills—language and timing. She developed the precise skills of the legal world, applying them to media services and school curriculum, in the process honing an art form beyond a craft. Possibly her art *and* her personal life were in the process of refinement unfolding similarly, for Fenebee recalled her “wrenching” at giving away her easel, paints, brushes, comparing art with the aging process. Successful aging requires life experiences to be more than a faded, empty shell of one’s immature self. And Fenebee does *not* want to paint “pretty art.” While that has a place and is not to be ridiculed, as she said, Fenebee knows that is not her space.

“Who knows, I’ll do it when I retire.” Fenebee’s voice tone was one of defiance and of determination, and her body tautened as if in sympathy recalling her feelings and thoughts as she gave her painter’s tools of trade away. Her insights that “young people don’t have enough life experience,” that “art is like aging,” her comment on Gauguin and Georgia O’Keefe places her whole life wishfully as about-to-be-encapsulated-on-canvas.

A Moratorium

Had my pen not fallen on the ground and so made me turn from the images that I was weaving into verse, I would never have known that meditation had become trance, for I would have been like one who does not know that he is passing through a wood because his eyes are on the pathway. (Yeats, 1997, p. 81)

Had Fenebee remained beyond the age of 55 at her work-station, likely she would have her eyes still on the pathway. Instead, she was stripped of her second social identity together with her social voice. In her words, “the Centre closed down and I lost my job entirely in television. I was non-participatory.” Her social spaces shrank. The sociocultural change towards control, with socioreligious institutional political assistance, required its people to cooperate with that shrinking of the soul as if balancing an accountant’s budget.

Nevertheless, her career termination has been enabling Fenebee to look around, to see the wood she was in and to explore her own pathway out into the clearing.

Living on the edge. "Maybe I'm too lazy, too fearful to live on the edge." Perhaps that is how Fenebee felt at the precise moment she discerned her direction. Certainly she has unconsciously but logically set in motion the process that appears to be her life's plan. She has always found her way into situations she wished to pursue. As an individual, by stating her needs or turning the changes, Fenebee has modified her unique spirit while generatively challenging those she lived and worked with. An intuitive introvert, working at the individual level in the smaller context, Fenebee has shifted perspectives at the institutional, the secular, and at the personal level.

What is the fear that holds her captive?

I have always in my own mind made a distinction between pretty art and art as a real expression of some inner seeing or inner experience. Inner seeing means a way of life. (Fenebee)

Fenebee mentioned two painters she admires. Georgia O'Keefe, who paints a statement with strong, broad strokes, and Paul Gauguin, who left a conservative profession and community to paint uniquely in his middle life. Each of the artists reveals his/her Essence (soul, psyche, energy, and personality), and have left behind a unique and lasting contribution.

Through the years Fenebee has explored her various and diverse artistic talents—etching, headstone, mural, book cover designs, theatre, lakehouse design, special greeting cards. By postponing, she has almost determinedly avoided her Essence of Self (her Dream, her essential Self).

Yet while Fenebee's lifescipt may read as "adjusting, postponing, adapting," of "other" work rather than "my" work; of other peoples' demands and timeframes being more important and urgent than her need to paint, is it procrastination, apprehension, or fear?

Perhaps *who* Fenebee is, *how* her life experiences have formed her, she is intuiting, shortly to be revealed on canvas. Perhaps she fears that self-exposure. But as Jung (1965) wrote, each of us to become whole must make that inner journey towards the inner recesses hidden within. Writers and artists who have taken this journey have discovered that fear to be unfounded (Hammarskjöld, Maslow, Erikson, Jung, Eleanor Roosevelt—to name a few). As an American psychologist, Barron, has written, "The lesson I had learned is one that everyone must learn who plunges into the creative process. It grips you in the depths of the self" (1997, p.x).

This is the challenge Fenebee seems to be confronting. She is experiencing potential stagnation and despair as she identifies her altruism and re-defines her priorities to incorporate self-care. Fenebee's issues of generativity/stagnation and ego integrity/despair are involving her once again in her foreclosed identity, her adolescent Dream. Then, her urge to paint was impractical.

She confided in reviewing her interview that while she experienced some of her brothers' privileges, she was also always conscious that she was supposedly inferior. She had internalised "it's a man's world," and felt that all the responsibility, purpose and competence she had acquired *still* could not be put to use. Somehow, she had excluded herself from her own frame of reference, subdued then, and still struggling with that now. What she perceived as her Essence of Self was channelled into others' service. Yes, "opposites though they are, both solitude and solidarity are essential if the artist is to produce works that are not only significant to his or her age, but that will also speak to future generations" (May, 1975, p. 12).

Fenebee has both solitude and solidarity. Her story adds yet another piece to the puzzle of how individual women's lives are constructed and defined within a particular sociohistorical and sociocultural timeframe. *How* this is achieved is assisted not only by ethnic background, educational opportunities, and socioeconomic status, but perhaps even more by the impact

of the religious affiliation or belief system she is to model, which, in the main, she internalizes. I believe Fenebee, whether consciously aware or not, has consistently sought her authentic Self. Her journey brings to mind a quotation from a film, *The Portrait*, (1993). A retired professor of English (and poet laureate) is paying a surprise visit to his daughter's art exhibition. He observes at length, in silence; she tenses herself for his comments. Finally, he states:

I think you are on the verge of finding yourself in yourself as an artist and I sense that you still need the crazy courage. The courage we all need to invade our own privacy. Hold back nothing in your work. I know you have it. You have it. Find more of that Meg, and you'll be very good. You'll paint like no one else. (Kleinbaut & Penn, 1993)

JULIA

I was born in 1939. When my father returned from WWII, we moved to the country. As very poor dairy farmers, we were trying to establish ourselves in a rather poor rural community. I remember a teacher at the primary school asking the composite-grade students what their ambitions were. Many of these students were turning 14 and about to leave school. I was 11 years old. When it was my turn I remember saying that I was quite unsure about my future; I hadn't thought about it; well, I'd probably be like my mother, I'd probably just get married and have children. I didn't think we had real choices in our life at that point. Most of the boys said, "Oh, we'll go and get a job at the factory." Most of the girls more or less thought they would just be at home helping their mothers until they became a mother themselves.

The next year my father sold the dairy farm, and, as he felt a little wealthier, I went to a private coeducational school in Melbourne for the next 3 years. We often chatted in our classes and I remember one of our male teachers saying, "You know, you can be whatever you like in your life. You have choices. It's up to you. If you work for something you want to be, you can be it. You can be anything you want to be." And I was just amazed. I remember thinking, "This can't be true, we don't have real choices in our life." I really have felt grateful to that teacher because I suddenly felt empowered for the first time in my life. Perhaps the teacher was right! I wanted to believe him. I did try!

I had a few piano lessons and even played in an Eisteddfod during the 3 years at that private school. I became envious of anyone else who play music; it seemed to be my own personal thing. I didn't think anyone else had such a close feeling to music as I. I would listen and

think, "No, they don't feel as close to music as I do anyway so it doesn't matter." I guess for the rest of my life I sought to achieve some competency as a musician or dancer. I didn't really mind which.

Then our circumstances went backwards again. We returned to the harsh realities of farm life and poverty. I escaped in the arts; my little mind just dreamed about the beautiful things, being a ballerina, listening to beautiful music. My love of the arts, ballet and music, was always something very private and very personal. When I heard any music on the radio I didn't want anyone else around me, I just wanted to listen to it. That was mine; it was something terribly personal to me.

I largely taught myself piano apart from those 3 years. Then during my last year at school I boarded in another town, going home at weekends. I worked after school in this family's shop to pay for my board. They had a piano so I took piano lessons for that year and made very rapid progress. I decided I wanted to go to the Conservatorium of Music—very unrealistic considering my experiences and training as a pianist. It wasn't easy; it was very, very difficult. I had opposition all the way through from family who wouldn't let me practise at home because the lounge-room was for family use and not for practising. My father had no ear for music and didn't want to hear it. My mother was sympathetic but couldn't change the situation. When I was home the family was home.

I had to leave school when I was 16 at the end of Year Eleven. As with everyone else, I put my name down to be a teacher or a nurse. I got an offer through the Teachers College to become a primary school teacher but nothing at the Conservatorium. When it came to the point, I thought, "No, I don't want to be a primary school teacher and live out in the country and be moved around. I will not be doing what I want to do." So I rejected that and went to work at a bank in Melbourne, living in some country girls' boarding house where again there was a beautiful piano. So it was only when I began working at the bank that I really had freedom to practice. I took lessons from a very good practical and theory teacher and practised each day after work. I didn't have a mentor, but I did have models. My piano teachers very much influenced my thinking, my work and approach to teaching, and my outlook on life. Music teachers do have that influence.

The Conservatorium of Music accepted me the next year. Of course with my limited background I didn't do very well, did I. I took part-time courses at the Conservatorium until they required full-time status. I couldn't afford to pay the fees.

After my marriage in 1962, I taught piano at home, kept up my lessons and continued my Diploma of Music. I worked during the day and taught piano at night. When I had my first child in 1965, I left day work and only taught piano until 1971. The children were brought up with music. I was teaching when pregnant; I was teaching while giving them a bottle on my lap; later they played on the floor nearby. They went everywhere with me. I eventually qualified as a music teacher in 1971 with a Diploma of Music (a 3-year course) and began

teaching at a technical school. Schools were very short of teachers at that point in time and they were employing unqualified, unregistered teachers. I was one of those. I now taught in a school during the day and at home in the evening, in addition to prep. work and marking. I have always worked. I had no help with the housework while studying, teaching school, teaching in my studio and while I had the small children. It was only during the 1980s for a short time that I had household help, as I was a little more affluent then. When the unions became militant about these unqualified, untrained teachers, I decided to go back to university and do my degree. I resigned from my position; I might have been asked to resign otherwise.

It was not until I was a fully-fledged music teacher, married, with a husband paying the bills, that I could teach piano, pay for my babysitting and courses at the Conservatorium. To upgrade to Degree status I needed a further 4 years, although they counted the Diploma as one year. This I did, mostly part-time, with a private teaching practice at home. And I had 3 children by the time I could begin my BMus at the Conservatorium. They went to the Conservatorium with me at times when they weren't being minded; they sat through lectures and so they knew the Conservatorium and the University very well geographically. They ended up there themselves as it happened. My husband wasn't home very much. He was working 3 nights a week in addition to full-time employment trying to get a house together.

I studied towards my BMus from 1958 to 1977, sometimes taking my first two children, born in 1965 and 1966 respectively, with me. It took all that time to actually achieve the expertise and qualifications in the area I had so desperately wanted to be in since I was a tiny child. Something just drove me from inside. It is still driving me. I don't know why. Because I was doing the first 3 years part time it took many years. But I was doing it as fast as I could humanly do so with the workload that I had. I actually ended up getting a studentship which meant that my fees were paid so I did the last year full time, although I had my piano students at home. You see, I needed to be self-sufficient in order to pay for babysitters, to pay for my course materials, lessons, and whatever else I had to do.

I seemed to be the oldest student, an isolate because I was at least 10 years older than the next youngest student. As well, because I dropped children off for babysitting and had to pick them up an hour later or whatever it was, I had no time to talk to anyone. I had no time to visit over coffee or do all the things other university students do, meeting and talking with people. I was in and out. But at the same time I didn't feel different or excluded as too old, I always felt comfortable with everybody. And with my neighbors too, even though all my friends were having families and couldn't believe why I'd want to do this, to put myself through all this. I didn't get any negative feedback though. I think they thought I might have been a bit of a fool, but I just did my thing. My student experiences have been quite different from my children's, because, you know, you don't want them to take so long to achieve their potential and ambitions. So you pay for them to finish that university degree in order to get on with their lives.

In 1978 I became a full-time teacher, teaching music in schools then right through until 3 years ago while maintaining private students. During that time, I reduced the number of private students as the workload was horrific. At one stage it went down to 3 students, but then when I gave up full-time employment with the Education Department I built it up again.

I was always hopeful of giving a performance, although I've always felt very inadequate. I've never had the time to finish polishing performance pieces. I'm still hoping that during the rest of my life that time might come. In my BMus final year, of course, I had to give a performance. But apart from exam performances, I've done little. I think I envy other people being able to do it well. I can't, even though I keep on telling myself, "Well, you know, you've had a difficult time trying to achieve what you've achieved already; people who are performing were really performing well when they were children and in their adolescence, when I was only a beginner."

I decided to begin an MEd after some years of teaching. My children were in high school. I thought, "I am going to take up a subject and start reading. Everyone talks about the wonderful novels; I've never even read Pride and Prejudice!" All through my life I thought of myself as a little country girl. I'd never read anything like that because every spare minute I'd practised. Other than that I was doing farm chores—milking cows, for example—so a life of books, reading, was never part of my life. Even when I was doing my VCE English at night school I could only do the minimum of reading. I thought everyone else knew more than I knew and I felt ignorant and embarrassed because my vocabulary wasn't what it should be. So I thought, "Now is the time in my life to enrol in a Bachelor of Arts or take some course to broaden my general education outlook."

While I was having difficulty in coming up with what I could personally cope with time-wise, on my desk came this application form to do a Graduate Diploma in Education Administration and it had all these courses in it (subjects like sociology) it looked very interesting. And I thought, "Well, it's three weekends in a semester for a whole subject! I could do that. I could give up three weekends." I checked at home, "Yes, I could probably do that." So I enrolled and I thought it just wonderful! I did two subjects in January, a week each, with a lot of independent work after that contact time. Then I did two more subjects the next year, finishing my Graduate Diploma of Education in 2 years. And I thought, Oh, I really did enjoy that. This is wonderful!" I ended up learning how to write and read, and I thought it was great.

We took several psychology courses on Jung and self-analysis. We looked at ambitions and circles of influence. We learned that our own theories were sound because they were legitimized by our own experience. I thought, "Well! While you may think you're ignorant, you're not as ignorant as you think you are." That was a revelation to me, and very empowering, for I had thought everything I did had to be checked with someone else. I'd ask, "Is that okay? Is that correct?" Now I thought, "I'm probably okay after all."

After I finished that degree, I thought, "Oh, I'll change schools," I thought, "Well, I am going to apply for some jobs." I felt very much empowered. I became a member on committees developing new courses with the Board of Studies, and lots of things like that. What else did I do at that stage? I started to run the Department of Music at the school.

Then the Universities amalgamated. I had taken my MEd at Hawthorn Institute of Technology, then The Institute of Education. Hawthorn amalgamated with Melbourne University. As I looked at the subjects, I thought, "These are just extensions of what I was doing except that the requirements are a little longer." I enrolled at Melbourne University in the early 1980s.

Also, at this time, I was given the position of Equal Opportunities Coordinator at an academically recognised Melbourne public high school. I didn't know anything about feminist theory; as a Masters' student at Melbourne University, the first subject I chose was a unit on Women in Education. I had to do a lot of reading on the history of women's subservience.

I was a very successful Equal Opportunities Coordinator. I transformed the school over the next 3 years to become inclusive in every aspect of the word. We reorganized the curriculum to make the girls part of, and not be disadvantaged by, any aspect of coursework. I looked at how the courses were structured. I looked at the physics courses and the physics teachers offered to do some work on teaching girls. We restructured the playground, the use of the tennis court. And it was not just the gender issue, we looked at the whole issue of equal opportunity to enable achievement of one's potential. For example, I tested the younger students in Year Seven entering our School who were below the required standards. We gave extra literacy classes for these 11-12 year olds to enhance their educational opportunities.

I was very, very interested when I started to research literacy. It opened a lot of doors. Historically, 20-25% of children are illiterate. The media keeps saying that literacy is very bad while the Government keeps saying "Every child is going to be able to read and write." But historically, in every country of the world, in every developed country, almost 20-25% of kiddies never learn to read and write properly. It's a fact! It may be IQs. It might be other reasons, but that is a huge barrier for any government to break, for when you try to teach some of these children (when you were teaching as you well know) some of these children don't retain anything you teach. There's lots of reasons.

While studying literacy, I decided to research the gifted and talented. I joined the Gifted and Talented Association to learn how I could help the many talented gifted underachievers. I tested students at our School and found we had highly gifted and talented adolescents (15%) that the staff didn't know about! The same curriculum was being used for 15% of our students at the one end, and for 25% of our students who were reading at the Grade 2 to Grade 4 levels, while we taught to the average students in the class! We restructured our classes, but then we had a change of government in the early '90s! So, unfortunately, with

all the staff cuts, these programs had to be discontinued.

I finished my Graduate Diploma by moving to Change Management which was my next unit. Leadership was one component. I went overseas three times with a consortium from Melbourne University to look at changes and implementations in education. We visited the University of Southern California, spent 2 weeks in Alberta looking at self-managing schools, and then travelled to Germany and England to look at teacher education. It was a very exciting time in my life. I loved it! I loved it all! And I came back thinking that I owned the world and I went for all these leadership positions and didn't get any of them.

While I may have a good knowledge base, I lack the interview-communication skills. Also, what is required in the main are head counters rather than visionaries. I wasn't the right person. I don't come across as a person who can control a school of 1000 people. I wasn't the image they were looking for, which I can appreciate—they're probably quite right—I mightn't have been very comfortable in those roles at all, with confrontation constantly hitting me.

I concentrated then on music education. Following the cuts in the education budget we were having real cultural conflicts. The educational changes were detrimental to arts programs in the schools, particularly in the music area. The music programs were being cut dramatically; many of my colleagues had been put in excess. I started becoming very, very concerned about the state of music education. As I had developed my own theories, I thought I could move on from a Diploma to a Doctorate in Music Education. I love learning, being involved in seminars and discussion. I'm also a conference addict, so I thought, "No, I want to keep going, this is exciting, I just love it." So I applied, was accepted for candidature at Monash University, and started the courses. My thesis topic evolved very easily.

Recently, one of my private students performed before an audience of 1000-odd at a formal dinner given by the Victorian Government for Education heads. I was a guest. A few days later I telephoned a person in the Education Department about my 50-page review paper. I had submitted a 50-page paper to the VCE Review Committee who are going to reorganize and revamp the music program in Victorian schools. I faxed teachers throughout Victoria for input. Many of the teachers said they were "bushed," were exhausted by all the changes. They don't want any more. I met with this official who gave me information on the future plans for music programmes. It is getting harder. He suggested I consider striking a committee of successful musicians to profile the necessity of music in schools (as, he said, the sports teachers have done—Dawn Fraser is one patron). Would I assist in forming a Committee of Patrons to raise funds for the school music programmes? That would be a new field of endeavour for me. I'm not certain about it as I do not see myself as a political person. While we were elaborating on the the importance of music in schools, he commented on this student, on his phenomenal talent. I was able to say I was his teacher.

When I returned part-time to the high-school classroom, they wanted to reinstate me at the

first-year level, even though I had been at maximum salary level when I left full-time teaching. I had to negotiate for the 5-year level! I learned recently that a male instructor I know was automatically hired on at level 12. And next week I have a 2-hour interview/review concerning my teaching skills with a Supervisor who told me he would be looking at my classroom skills to see whether I was fulfilling the program requirements. He was somewhat embarrassed when I quietly informed him that I was aware of them—after all, I had written that programme of studies in question.

Have I achieved what I've wanted to achieve? Well, I suppose basically my ambition has never been realized because I think I wanted to be a concert pianist and I never will be. I still want to be. Now I'm at the piano trying to play some of the music I've always wanted to be able to play, knowing very well that the technique has gone backwards and I haven't the brain capacity to cope with all the notes—learning and remembering them the way I would like to.

I will resume lessons as soon as I feel more competent in reading and playing my music. I have some wonderful students at the moment who have a technique and a brain far superior to my own. I give them pieces of music that I take months to learn and they learn them in a week. While I believe I have the capacity to help them interpretively and technically, I would just love to be able to play to them better. One of these days I may, but I know that my brain isn't quite there. I think by not starting music tuition until late adolescence that the mathematical side of my brain wasn't developed. I didn't do maths at school, either, because of course girls didn't do maths, so therefore the connection between my right and left side of my brain for memorizing music has never been made. I've always felt dumb because I don't retain information as quickly or as easily as my very intelligent colleagues. I learn it okay—but I take a little longer. One of my biggest problems has been low self-esteem and feeling dumb and incapable of achieving. It's still there! You just can't push it away. How stupid! I'm supposed to be coming out with a Doctorate soon and yet I'm still feeling the dumb child. It's so ridiculous. You know, I've had a great life, but there have been so many barriers to break down.

I think perhaps my feeling of low self-esteem was because I was the youngest girl in a family of four boys. My mother had a pretty hard time as the washerwoman and the housewife, and girls weren't supposed to be educated. Mother went to high school for the one year. My father didn't—he was almost illiterate. I was brought up thinking I was in a class of illiterates, a part of that community. The way you are brought up in your childhood has a huge influence on your mental state for the rest of your life. You either carry it or you try and break it down. Also, I was brought up to be "seen and not heard" and therefore my capacity to express myself verbally was never very good at all. I'm still fighting that. As Equal Opportunities Coordinator, when I had to address the whole staff and talk about all these issues I was so nervous I'd nearly die. And, of course, when you don't present yourself with confidence, that doesn't inspire the rest of the staff to think of you as a potential leader. I think I've done my Doctorate to prove to myself that I'm not dumb as well as to

compensate for not being a pianist.

I suppose the external obstacles were not unreasonable. You were just being overworked. You tried to do too much with too little time. I didn't have a terribly supportive husband, but that didn't work against me, so I can't say that was an obstacle. He came to my MEd graduation. He couldn't see . . . I must be a very hard person to live with and very hard to understand what's driving me forward. So my obstacles are more obstacles that I'm fighting internally—my nervousness in talking to people, stammering for words. I am just trying to prove myself all the time, that underneath this person there is something more that is trying to get out?

What I've had to come to terms with in my life now is to stop thinking that what is in front of me lies in the workforce necessarily, because at 58 years of age you don't normally get promoted into new, exciting jobs. People do, but it's very much the exception. I've been working through that one consciously for 12 months, a lot longer unconsciously. But I don't think I want to work for an organization now with all the structural changes and pressures. I don't think I need to be fighting those battles and obstacles.

I am aware that in trying to do too many things in too little time, relationships in my life haven't been developed well. As one gets older one realizes they have to be looked at, too. And so I joined a Provis Club and now I've got a circle of friends with ordinary-type interests; that part of my life needs to be developed. And I've gone back to the church to look at spirituality as I feel I need to search that as well. While I have gained a lot in other ways, I've had little time to think about anything but the reality of getting the housework and the schoolwork done. As many older people start to look backwards and look at why they are here, I've been spending a little more time in that area. I've thought, "There is another life out there that I've been putting on hold."

I'd like to play tennis. I walk. I've taken up with gym and am trying to get a healthy body again as that went by the wayside. A healthy mind, healthy body, friendships, and interests. There are many interest groups in the Provis Club, depending on the membership. Mine has a golf club, a tennis club, and a theatre club (I love the theatre). I'm still at the point where I am wondering how I will fill 20 more years if I have them. I do know that if I've only got 5 years I am going to fit as much of everything in as I can. That's another thing, the realization that at this time of your life, how much longer does one have on loan? When your very best girlfriend dies of cancer, you think, "Well. Why am I here? What am I doing? What can I do for humanity in the time I've got left? Do I want to go back to work and be treated in the way that we're treating a lot of people at the moment?" So many of my colleagues are on such an overload that they could now drop dead the next week. Currently, I'm trying to see what is out there, what people enjoy doing.

I've been fortunate that I've had lots of job offers and interesting things that I've taken up in my thesis. I have taken on this new role at Deakan University as Secondary Teacher

Examiner. These activities will keep my mind busy. I also feel rewarded because they're the type of jobs given people with more experience.

I am aware of a growing number of people taking up music and I still want to take up cello. I'll do so once my thesis is finished. I've always wanted to play in an orchestra. My children are doing all the things that I really wanted to do in my life and I'm just delighted for them. I think that perhaps I might have had too big an influence in their formulating their own ambitions, but they seem to be happy doing what they do. I do feel, too, that I should be doing some charity work but I have to discover how I can achieve that.

Presently, while I want to continue developing and contributing, I also realize my husband and I are not friends. We are living separate lives. I visit my mother (who is very proud of my successes) and wonder how similar I will be to her in 20 years time. My Doctorate is almost finished and with the shift in educational ideology, I wonder whether I will be black-balled (as a colleague was because of his topic). At my age, though, is it important? I'm really wondering about my values. And whether relationship isn't more important than a profession.

I see myself as self-actualizing. My children are very supportive, proud of me and often make positive comments. At the moment I am feeling a little powerless to plan and to set goals. I would like the flexibility to follow the paths opening up to me that I am interested in. I want the power to say no, but I am feeling happy and contented at the moment. I am particularly proud of my highly talented students who probably have far more talent in the performance aspect than I have ever had yet are not moving on to another teacher. I must be teaching them well. Actually, musicians always feel inadequate as there are such great heights to reach. It keeps one humble. As far as I am concerned one has lost the plot if one ever reaches the stage of knowing it all.

Because society defines children as a woman's prime responsibility, she needs to clarify what her reproductive life will be, and whether she is to be single or a member of a partnership. She may be working to the limit of her capacity throughout her twenties, but, when her inner discussion on these subjects arrives at a firm resolution, her working self blossoms, and she enters a highly productive stage of life. (Conway, 1994, p. 148)

Overview

Julia is a gently spoken, quietly confident woman in her late 50s. I first observed, and was later introduced to, Julia in the early 1990s. It was at a high school music program, in which

Julia's students (divided into four groups) had presented their interpretation and production of the music given them. Each production was different, unique, and delightful. The students' enthusiasm was contagious. Julia emceed (announced the program). During and after the performance, in conversation, she focused on her students. I next saw Julia in 1997, after she agreed to participate in this study.

Reviewing significant aspects of her life during the interview, Julia concluded by saying she is self-actualizing. Julia to my mind *has* that intrinsic conscience. "It insists that we be true to our inner nature and that we do not deny it out of weakness or for advantage or for any other reason (Maslow, 1962, p. 7). In Julia's case it is a conscious acknowledgment of her inner core, her *raison d'être*, her Essence of Self. This recognition began in her childhood, in her affinity towards her music and its expression. Music inspired Julia, and throughout her life, it seems, she has used her music to transcend any economic and emotional impoverishment.

During this interview, Julia also spoke quietly about her marriage and husband. He "is not terribly supportive," she said, "but it didn't work against me, so I can't say that was an obstacle." She thought she "must be a hard person to live with," that she "must be very hard to understand." In 1998, when I again visited, we went for lunch. During that year, after 36 years of marriage and three children, Julia had left her husband. Once the brokenness was recognized and named, Julia left. As she visualized their future, she was no longer prepared to live separate, but married, lives if they were not friends. A courageous action from a resilient woman, the separation was dignified, their grown children seemed somewhat relieved, while two former spouses now have an amicable relationship. Julia chose, and purchased, her new home within walking distance of the Art Centre. Her former husband drops by occasionally for a visit.

Understandably, Julia is in transition. She has completed her Doctorate, teaches music part-time in a highly respected public high school, piano in her own music studio, and in the

recreational and social realm, is shifting her focus towards "ordinary type activities" and interests. Losing her closest friend to cancer several years ago, Julia felt the loss deeply, grieving, perhaps, both her friend's death and the finiteness of life. Recognizing she lacked the spiritual component as well as relaxation and play, she began attending the Cathedral services, joined a Club, and selected activities she most enjoys and wishes to develop. She is concentrating more on relationships, widening her radius beyond friendships within the music or educators' circles. Recently a grandmother, this event, somewhat to her surprise, seems to be personally influencing future aspirations, directions and decisions.

Julia's Experiences of Anomie

Rather than a major tragedy or traumatic event, Julia's anomie was one of relationship deprivation, frustration, and anxiety. She transcended these discomforts by focusing on developing her talent and later broadening her educational expertise and knowledge of Self. Reviewing her life history, at significant transitional stages (pre-adolescent, adolescent, midlife) one sees Julia's acknowledgment of her innate need for harmony, together with a growing awareness of isolation, distance, and, eventually, her husband's animosity.

Born into economically, socioculturally and educationally impoverished circumstances, how has Julia evolved into a self-actualizing person? As in a symphony, discordant notes and momentary disharmony can be a minute passage or the full schemata, so we may choose, or not, to resolve discord. Julia chose to listen to her inner self through her music, at first unconsciously (listening to music on the farm as a child), then consciously (her realization and recognition at her first Eistedfodd). Overviewing Julia's history, as she presented it, Julia's Essence of Self, soul, or psyche, is her music. Her childhood music fantasy perhaps took the place of another's imaginary friend. Her music, I feel, is her captor and enlightener. What further fascinated me, given at times overwhelming obstacles she overcame along her journey, finally became my questions: *How* was Julia's initiative never diminished? *What* is the ingredient that kept her so attuned toward what appears consistently to have been good choices and right decisions?

The Question That Became her Life Direction and her Quest

Julia was first asked to focus on her future in a country public high school. She was 11 years old. The teacher asked the question of the students but gave no feedback. This teacher didn't offer hope. From Julia's account, he/she simply listened, offering no alternatives. Julia listened to her fellow classmates, and, following the clues from her social surroundings, felt she'd "marry and have children." At this point, Julia accepted what, it appears, her class members saw as their lot in life: "I didn't think we had real choices in our life at this point in time."

When her family moved into Melbourne the following year, Julia attended a coeducational private school. A male teacher asked the same question, listened to each answer, then challenged each student's future identity. They had choices, it required a belief in one's self and one's aspirations, and perseverance to carry these through to fruition. Simplistic perhaps, but for the first time, Julia heard hope and possibilities. A professional adult in her then sociocultural world challenged them; Julia accepted; it became her personal commitment. She had believed her future circumstances constructed her, she the passive recipient of fate. Now she knew differently. She saw possibilities, identifying the feelings as "gratefulness" towards him and, towards herself, "empowerment for the first time."

Interestingly, at the time of our interview, recalling this incident, Julia made a significant statement. "I *did* try and believe that!" How was she feeling, what was she recalling in her mind's eye as she did a quick overview from being an 11- to 12-year-old girl to a middle life successful woman, who indeed *had* married, had had children, while at the same time evolving two highly successful careers—motherhood and music?

Her Essence of Self: Inner Momentum

Two significant occurrences altered Julia's life. The first was the private school teacher when she was 12 years old informing the class they could enable and empower themselves

because they had choices, all that was required was working towards them. Julia focused, internalising the impact of this statement. The second significant occurrence was the recognition of her artistic ability during an Eisteddfodd competition. It wasn't the technique Julia recognized—rather, it was the degree of sensitivity towards the interpretation of each composition. She was between the ages of 14 and 15 at the time. Twelve years old is pre-puberty, the beginnings of adult stirrings, the endings of childhood. Fifteen years is on the cusp of ending a significant phase of one's life, compulsory education, and assessing one's future directions. Both these incidents seem to have intrinsically motivated Julia from then on. The first incident provided the impetus (the *how*), the second, the focus (the *what*). Combination of both became the process, her personality foundation. Perhaps her parents also facilitated her future direction by endorsing her stay in a neighbouring town during her last school year, thus removing her from their town and a school environment where "many of the students" left at 14 and "got a job at the factory," or if female, "stayed home and helped their mother until marriage."

How did Julia cope with her low socioeconomic childhood, a childhood of "harsh realities of being on the farm and being very poor?" As she said, she "escaped into the arts." In her inner imaginative world she visualized her future reality, her logical component balanced the affective (her aesthetic, artistic talent) by attending to her struggles and strivings. Her logical, cognitive mind "heard" and acted upon her creative. Or, as Maslow wrote, "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to ultimately be at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization (1964, p. 23). To my mind, there was another key factor. Julia kept her Essence of Self hidden from outsiders. She guarded her fantasy, whether at that time consciously aware, or not. She knew she didn't want anyone around her as she listened to her music. No-one was to prick that bubble. It was "terribly personal, her love of the arts, ballet and music," as she said, quietly. As one listens and reads her sentiments, it is almost as if Julia saw herself as the guardian of her music muse. She tries to factualize it, commenting that it is simply "one's perception" of one's strong belief in possibilities.

One observes in dialogue a strong thread of unquenched intuition, of the tacit knowledge incubating and opportunities not only being seen but Julia invariably finding a way. She is ahead of a trend. She has a strong background of knowledge and connections. She also sees possibilities. *How* has she remained connected to her intuitive sense? While still young she listened carefully to other pianists but it does not appear to have been an outward competitive spirit—rather, she tended her inner garden in seeking self-excellence, skill development, and interpretation. As a young child of 12 playing in an Eistedfodd, she listened for interpretation, to how absorbed and in tune with her music each player appeared to be. Julia is also non-manipulative, instead open-spoken in her reflections. She proffers information rather than asking questions to elicit others' knowledge. In turn, her trust and concern for people provides insight, both towards herself and towards others.

Julia's intuitive channel remains open, perhaps because Julia is also her own counsel. How does she maintain this inner source of strength? Rather than strategically ascertaining and planning an end result, manipulating a gain that places her above and somewhat aloof and beyond others (a power position), for her, life is a process of unfolding potential and possibilities (empowering and incorporating). She appears to be her own best friend; solitude, such as a weekend island retreat to decide upon her marriage and future, is a companion. Interaction, sharing and care (generativity, as Erikson named it) she certainly shows. As well, what Julia has experienced negatively during her life she will not inflict upon others. There is an absence of bearing a grudge, of getting even. She has internalized the Australian maxim of "a fair go for all." At no time in Julia's life does it appear that her self-integrity has been so violated that her psyche has splintered. Did she keep her counsel since childhood, her music her counsel? Communing as she said she did with her art, possibly her childhood taught her. Whatever her survival, music became her energy source, and eventually, her thriving.

Perhaps, too, because she didn't have a traditionally indoctrinated religious upbringing, Julia could develop her fantasy world without institutional inhibitions. Possibly, too, Julia

received impetus from working throughout her life in her Essence of Self, her music. She did not have to discipline herself against her better nature. Certainly, significant persons in her personal life could not enter or encroach into her music field to undermine her.

Together with visualization, Julia uses self-talk. She uses objectivity in her use of the pronoun "you" to generalize from the particular or for distancing to gain a larger perspective, and by viewing outside of herself—stepping back from too vulnerable a realization of the moment such as when self-referencing "that underneath this person there is something more there that is trying to get out? Trying to get out? Yes." Her lack of languages and math was not uncommon for Australian girls during the 1950s. However, her recognition of the inhibiting effect this had had upon her throughout her life, not only in memorizing music scores but in general feeling of well-being and self-confidence, fueled her determination to provide equal opportunity for each student in all areas, including the playing field. She recognizes her lack of confidence in public speaking as also influenced by the cultural axiom through the 1950s, of children being seen and not heard.

Despite her perceived lack of confidence, though, whatever Julia set out to do in her adolescent and adult years she ultimately excelled in. She was certainly undeterred by what may have seemed unrealistic, unattainable goals, namely, the Conservatorium of Music and her Doctoral degree. Julia has the ability to assess situations, obstacles and potential, and draw a grounded viewpoint, an honest, reflective appraisal of herself and her capabilities. An obstacle appears to be given her direct gaze and then taken in her stride. Obstacles are challenges and are to be expected. But it is more than that.

Towards the Commonweal

At no point in a conversation during and since that interview have I noticed any undermining of others' possibilities as she achieved her goals. Instead, like a spark kindling a flame and a fire, Julia quietly develops and shares her talent as she continues through life—with students, her children, friends, colleagues and people she meets in conferences and in casual

entertainment settings. Julia is a natural educator, a professional person. While she voiced her concern over her lack of involvement in community projects and volunteer work, throughout her life she has been doing just that. Building her knowledge-bank and using it as social goodwill capital, she inspires, challenges, and encourages. Self-gain, to my mind, is not her motivation. She remains involved with family. Her piano studio is at her mother's home. Thus, a visit, conversation, and music is also a part of her mother's regular routine. Her mother is one of her supporters, proud of her children's achievements, as Julia is of her own children's.

Honing her Values

One sees the lessening of what could have been, senses the sadness and wistfulness Julia carries with her of a dream that wasn't *quite* achieved. Yet two core values appear, one egalitarianism, the other, belief in possibilities and the basic goodness of humankind. Her ultimate dream of becoming a performing artist has not yet been accomplished. Meanwhile, she is assisting other musicians to achieve this goal. Her son plays in a symphony orchestra, one daughter is a cello instructor and an award-winning player. And there is her present student. Possibly, Julia has distributed her musical gift more within her classrooms, her home studio and with her children than had she become a performer. She has incorporated her scholarship, her musical ability, and her life experiences into her curriculum development, conference participation, insights and activities. She began this process from the moment she heard one has choices and can achieve what one sets out to do if one applies one's self.

Julia was not overwhelmed or defeated by her disadvantages—as a child, little piano playing at home, spasmodic instruction. Instead, she used initiative and task orientation. She was accurate in her decision not to accept teaching initially. How could have she focused on her musical talent, given that the teaching profession is all consuming? So she used a bank job as a stop-gap measure. Boarding at a student hostel would have encouraged her focus as well, each young woman absorbed in her studies. Her family seems to have given her

leeway, not deflecting her decisions or determining her job future. There doesn't appear to have been opposition to her decision not to enter the highly respected teaching profession, nor any attempt at coercing her into it. Were her parents aware of her decision? Given her father's hostility to her piano playing, perhaps her mother was the one confided in, because Julia mentions she was "sympathetic" to her daughter's talent. Perhaps here it was fortunate her parents were not professionals. Whereas a professional family might have insisted upon a teaching profession, families in Julia's situation likely viewed a bank job as having some status.

Optimism and altruism being two of Julia's values, she views life's inevitable disappointments and failures as temporary setbacks. With her strong inner will and determination to accomplish her dream, one sees a process, an inner talent propelling and unfolding, widening into the academic-educational area during her early 40s. Her knowledge base combines both her intellectual and her artistic strengths. Knowledge is reflected upon, sieved, applied, and internalized. Julia's independent spiritedness, quietly unassuming but like a steel thread of determination means gratification is deferred. Deterrants such as having to curtail her BMus degree for a number of years because she can't afford the full-time fees were simply momentary deferral. Two children, born a year apart, and a husband immersed in his profession were facts Julia lived with. She would accomplish, using her own initiative and funding, not obligated to anyone, nor inconveniencing any person. Inconveniencing herself was a given—very much reinforced by her then Australian culture of womanhood as the good wife, the good mother, the "lady." Generally, women simply "did it all" if they wanted to achieve any life for themselves apart from tending to their husband's needs and aspirations. Thus she developed "the detachment, the independence, the self-governing character [of the self-actualized person], the tendency to look within for the guiding values and rules to live by" (Maslow, 1962, p. 182).

Leadership: Focusing on Potential

Academic and career disappointments seem to have been taken in stride as part of life as

process. When Julia was interviewed and not accepted for a managerial-style leadership position at the high school, she realistically assessed their school administration's requirements as possibly too regulatory, rule- and conduct-defined for her personality and creative vision. Instead, she focused her concerns, her energy, and expertise on the state of the arts in the Public Education System, in her case, music. Her decision to resign from full-time teaching at 55 years of age had no element of pique—she remains concerned about the future of State school education, concerned for the students.

Focusing these concerns, Julia interviewed the public-school music teachers State wide. The outcome was a 50-page report she presented to the Education Department Music Director, incorporating the input from teachers in the field, together with her field- and present-day experiences and concerns. It was well received. Her music curriculum is currently in use. Her Doctoral thesis and presentation of conference papers address these concerns. Julia's concern is that education continue to be viewed as an intangible asset rather than for an individual's self-gain and profit, much as goodwill on the accountant's balance sheet. In short, her leadership style enhances the individual, encouraging the development of his or her potential. Her childhood, adolescent and young adult struggles, joys and sadnesses, the overcoming of, at times, incredible odds (such as when first accepted by the Conservatorium of Music) evolve into empathy and compassionate understanding, the foundation of her teaching and leadership style.

Julia has assessed her perceived weaknesses—low self-esteem being one, lack of a well-rounded education another. Typically, she acts. Her perceived insecurities have become her strengths. Despite her academic, artistic and professional recognition, Julia feels she lacks confidence. Nevertheless, she introduced the enrichment and equal-opportunities programs in her high school, creating the opportunity, then constructing sociocultural possibilities and opportunities for every young adolescent. The lessening of her giftedness potential and academic opportunities due to sociocultural circumstances have become developmental possibilities for similar students. She introduced a giftedness program together with remedial

literacy programs for struggling students entering the High School. She enlightened fellow staff members about gender discrepancies. She provided tuition, emotional, academic support, and a role-model for her own children who completed their educational goals. Julia's groundedness in music seems to have fueled her motivation in all areas of her life.

Environmental Influence, Sociocultural Exclusion and Inclusion

As we have read, Vygotsky personally had experienced the curbing of a cultural-historical context and its effects upon an individual's intellectual and affective development. *But*, he also recognized life's dynamic growth process, an educator's influence. An educator observes, encourages, and extends an individual student's perceived limits of his or her intellectual and aesthetic capabilities.

What would Julia have accomplished without inclusion by a sociocultural group throughout her life welcoming and extending her aspirations and contributions? During the 1980s, in the decade of her 40s, educational and social programs flourished. At this time Julia began her academic studies, successfully challenging her fear of scholastic inadequacy. She thrived on networking and association memberships, her publishing, conference attendance, and presentations. Her husband's lack of interest or inclination to share interests did not appear to inhibit her. Julia's activities possibly absented her from an uncomfortable and unwelcoming home environment.

In her early 50s, during the early 1990s, educational philosophy and policies underwent a major shift in focus. Budgets were cut, programs and schools closed, the experienced professional core downsized. Julia had shortly before returned from overseas, having been invited as a member of an education consortium to visit USA, Canada, Europe and England to look at *Schools for the Future* after-the-millennium projections. There were three such trips. Julia perceived herself as being at the peak of her accomplishments and career, having shortly before completed her MEd at the most prestigious university in her State. The year was 1993, Julia had returned to the high school, had applied for a leadership position and

not gotten it.

Temporarily devastated and disappointed, Julia assessed that the qualities wanted were neither her strengths nor her professional ethic. Typically, Julia remained realistic. What was wanted was "a head-counter," she is a "visionary;" the present-day educational policy had undergone a major shift, the communication style and tactics required probably unsuited to her personality and style. She felt she possibly presented as "timid."

Disquieted over the new educational mandate and curriculum focus, noting the "detrimental effect on arts programs in the schools, particularly in music," Julia became proactive as she had during her late 20s when an unqualified teacher. Once again, Julia displayed her fine leadership qualities. In her early 50s, noticing her music colleagues being made redundant and music programs being cut, Julia applied to begin a doctoral program. She was accepted. Using her doctoral program of studies, her thesis, and conference presentations, Julia focused within the academic environment on the state of music within all schools. She focused on what she felt was essential. Utilizing her successful music curriculum, she identified what was threatening her professionally and shared these insights with her colleagues, the students, and the music programs within all schools. Additionally, by undertaking her doctoral degree, Julia challenged her mountain peak, her academic fear, her perception of being "not as bright" as her academic colleagues. Once again she succeeded. While completing her doctoral program, she was proactive in publishing and presenting papers at conferences, attending seminars, interacting, networking, encouraging and acknowledging the work of professional teachers and educators. All this activity, despite her concern (mentioned during the interview) that, given the current political climate, her philosophy could result in marginalization. But that didn't, and hasn't, deterred her.

Julia has maintained her initiative. On the personal level, she has confronted each deprivation—poverty, social exclusion, musical contribution, musical performance possibility, academic inadequacy, and shyness. Economically independent since the age of

15, she remains "the captain of her ship." On the sociocultural and professional level, Julia shares her academic knowledge, her professional expertise, her learned resources. She has chosen to use her childhood realities, her personal-life experiences towards a compassionate understanding and concern for present-day youths' dreams and aspirations for *their* future.

Towards her Future

Reflecting upon the conversations and interview material, her husband remained a distant figure, living his separate life. As a couple they do not appear to have had shared interests. Julia could continue her music providing she also took care of the house and children. Her wife role, it seems, was for service. Her husband's needs would be met first. Accommodating reality was her coping mechanism for the longest time (her self-explanation that of being "difficult to understand"). Yet she seemed able to separate and transcend until her dissertation had been completed, when the tension of living in a friendless environment finally stretched into a void. Julia wanted to experience joy, harmony, and a lack of tension. She left. How could she self-actualize otherwise?

Julia now enjoys her newfound space, her freedom to choose, the absence of tension, the presence of laughter and her children dropping by, entertaining, and walking to concerts. She has planted a small garden and placed a patio table and chairs in that sunny space. Inside, she has bought herself a new couch, many comfortable cushions, a new dinner set, crystal and art glassware. Her mother's embroidery, petitpoint, crocheting and china painting indicate Julia's aesthetic beginnings. Her mother had developed these interests during her 50s, when adult education opportunities opened briefly for the women who had lost them due to the Depression and War.

Nearing 60 years of age, Julia has, as she said, accomplished her academic goals. She used her doctoral studies and their completion as a substitute for what must have been a major hurdle to overcome, the recognition that her long-standing dream of becoming a concert pianist would never be fulfilled. As she said quietly, "I think I've done my doctorate to prove

to myself that I'm not dumb as well as to compensate for not being a pianist." Recently, Julia assessed what she had accomplished musically, given her late beginning, and felt satisfied. Significantly, she would like to learn the cello, she would like to play in an orchestra. Based on Julia's life history, this could well occur. Meanwhile, she believes her educational professional focus is lessening.

How she negotiates the next stage—as she said, being close to 60 years of age—seems to be shifting her from her former drive to excel and share her expertise. She seems presently at a crossroads, a further synthesizing and inner assessment point. She realizes there has not been enough play or “lightness of being” in her life. This she is now exploring. She spent three days on an island in solitude, where she worked through her anxiety over leaving her long-term relationship, the financial and life-style stresses resulting. She returned refreshed, knowing a necessary action equivocated over for 10 years was right. She has reached yet another watershed in her life. She left a marriage, not willing to adapt to a joyless and friendless relationship. A few years before, she could not and would not continue teaching in a politically constructed dysfunctional high school environment. Using her music as her shield, her psychic boundary, if you wish, Julia does not “put up with” permanently.

Ego integrity or despair? Julia's ultimate challenge to her integrity was her relationship—after so many years of marriage, possibly a very difficult decision. Her financial resources, her perceived potential, continuing inclusion by society, and employment possibilities had lessened. Basic needs costs keep increasing. As Julia stated, “at 58 years of age you don't normally get promoted into new, exciting jobs.” Not only that, she found on returning to teach part time that under a covert patriarchal umbrella, her salary and skill level were back to baseline. Yet, noting her mother's life and present lifestyle, her former colleagues' dilemmas in their current teaching roles, the death of a close friend, and her void in segments of her life, Julia once again took a calculated risk. Once recognized, Julia challenges obstacles. One observes a quiet pride, an energy fueled by a life lived with integrity, tenacity, altruism and concern for the commonweal.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Considering the absence of affection and cooperation between her and her husband, how could Julia have remained in her marriage and self-actualized? An innate urge within her propels her to the Growth Needs, her core of Self. Julia's childhood experiences placed her at the Safety level. She determined, and has maintained her economic independence throughout her life. Intuitively, she perceived herself at the Esteem Level (competence, approval, recognition) from her pre-adolescent and mid-adolescent experiences onwards, first to self and outward towards enhancement of others' potential. Settling her separation with little to no conflict, Julia's accommodation in a growth setting can be viewed as one of consensus, as unconditional positive regard.

Julia views herself as "self-actualizing." At what level does it appear she was to live? For 36 years Julia struggled between the professional world of her Self (actualizing through her musical and academic successes) and her home environment. Ultimately, Julia confronted what she feared most—that which she had hoped for but in fact seems never to have had—her husband's commitment level towards her and their marital relationship.

Maslow and Erikson. Whether Julia was consciously aware of being pulled from her aesthetic and cognitive core down through the Esteem area towards the Belongingness and Love section is difficult to determine. Certainly, admiration, affection, and positive regard appear to have been withheld. Ultimately, only she could fear for her psychological wellbeing. She risked. She left.

Consistently, Julia has shown generativity in her writing of curriculum and research articles, musical programs and interaction with students and fellow colleagues, her involvement with her children and friends. Reflecting upon her life to this point and beyond as she did by isolating herself on an island for three days is indicative of the soul-searching essential towards ego integrity. Julia undertook a life review and courageously determined to leave her marriage.

Julia's Essence of Self

As an unpretentious person, applying the key components of American psychologists Rogers, Maslow, Allport, and Horney, it appears that Julia has determined at whatever stage or age of her life from adolescence on to become fully functioning (Rogers), self-actualizing (Maslow) functionally autonomous (Allport) and a real self rather than a pseudo or falsely constructed self (Horney).

Her "Now" Moment

Presently, global—and therefore individual—horizons are undergoing considerable restructuring and changes culturally, ideologically, and educationally. Is it important, wonders Julia, to be concerned about school music programs at her age? Isn't relationship more important than a profession? She is proud of her highly talented students, of her children, of her own accomplishments. She "wants more flexibility to follow paths opening up for her that she is interested in." There are still many goals she wishes to reach—playing in an orchestra, learning the cello, fulfilling ordinary-type interests, developing ordinary-type relationships. "Actually," Julia comments, "musicians always feel inadequate as there are such great heights to reach." How can one possibly ever reach the stage of "knowing it all?" If one does, says Julia, reflecting upon a musician's strivings, as far as she is concerned, "one has lost the plot."

When the process of the person is dynamically integrated and he is open to his aesthetic sense, he is sensitive to a lack of wholeness and life, and for his own comfort moves to bring about a dynamic integration in his world—to protect, maintain, and promote life, to create wholeness. (Wilson, 1956, pp. 218-219)

ELLEN

I was born into poverty in a small town in the Appalachian mountains, surrounded by family, relatives, and our pioneer history. I have always remembered that my mother wanted me to be an artist. Because I had some skill in drawing, my parents were sure that I would

become this talented, wealthy artist who would then take care of them in their old age. It scared me to death as I always knew that my natural dexterity and coordination were a far cry from the skills one needed. I had never felt like an artist. At the same time, I hadn't the foggiest clue what I'd do!

Both my cousin and my sister were in nurse's training, so for a while I wanted to be a nurse—simply emulation, I think. I went for the interview, but when the Nursing Supervisor said, "You'll never make it, you're too small," I accepted her decision rather too easily. Instead, I lived at home, working at various jobs earning very, very paltry salaries while becoming more and more unhappy, even sulky at times. I was marking time, yet I wasn't earning enough money to save for college. You see, I knew for certain that the only way to become a self-sustaining adult was to go away and get an education. I also knew that I had to be whatever I was going to be; and I knew that this would mean moving far away from home, from my peers who stayed—in short, moving out of my known community. Not only did that seem unlikely, but it was also very, very scary.

Then my employer, who also happened to be a State Senator, asked me to sit the Senatorial Scholarship Examination. Generally, one scholarship only was awarded each year, alternating a boy and a girl; the year I had graduated was the year that a boy was eligible. Now there were going to be two scholarships awarded, one to a girl and one to a boy. To my, "I'm not eligible for it; I've been out of school for 3 years; besides, what am I going to remember?" he simply replied "Go take the exam." If he hadn't said that, I may have shrugged my shoulders and stayed in the "slough of despond." But I listened, I sat the exam and tied for the top mark.

This was a teaching scholarship that required 2 years of service in my State following graduation. While I was interested in several different areas, I chose English because it was the easiest—I love reading and literature and I have a keen ability to remember details, to analyze, and to write. Also, I realized that possession of manual dexterity does not make an artist, and possession of a singing voice does not create a music teacher—at least in the secondary school system. I lacked a strong instrumental background.

I made the conscious choice as soon as I got this scholarship that I would never go back to my birthplace except to visit. It is an idyllic spot but tourists totally changed it. Tourism became the main industry. For people who live there, unless you own land or a business that fuels this tourist industry, then it's a good place to be from. I also knew that if I married a person from my home town, I would be marrying somebody who had no better than a high school education and who would be stuck in a series of hand-to-mouth jobs all of his life. And that was going to be a tough, tough life. So, if I married, it would be to move away from there, which I did.

I was 21 years old when I entered the Protestant-supported in loco parentis College. As I was a Senatorial Scholarship holder, they were forced to accept me. Fortunately, because

I was young looking, my age didn't make a great deal of difference to my freshman classmates so I fit myself in okay there. The seniors also appreciated my driver's licence. I battled a loss of confidence at first, as I had entered a college where wealthy adolescents went. I couldn't get home, and I was extremely homesick for my mountains. While my tuition, room, and board were covered, my personal supplies and textbooks weren't. There wasn't anything really left over. I couldn't go to a restaurant with friends; I ate in the dining room. But it was good for me in the long run.

The College was a great leveller; I saw what money could and couldn't buy. For instance, while money could give you a chance at a good education, it couldn't buy advantage. Money couldn't buy a great deal of campus prestige either, as all students lived in dorms and no cars were allowed. The College didn't allow campus distinctions between people who had money and people who did not, but everyone knew who was wealthy, and everyone knew I was not. You could see the differences in room furnishings and in the way we wore our clothes—they could wear scrubbies with a great air of elegance, whereas if I wore them, I was obviously just a hick in scrubbies. I did very well scholastically and not horribly at friendships, although I wouldn't have called myself popular—I made friends, but not with everybody.

As I was a late entrant, I wasn't placed with the other freshman entrants but in the senior dormitory wing. That "never-quite-belonging" feeling was enhanced when I was placed in the wing that had all of the top sorority sisters from the two top sororities. One girl's roommate had just married; she had no roommate so in I went! These students assessed the situation and took me under their wing as we were the same age although vastly different in experience. They wouldn't call me Ellen or Ellie; they used my surname so that I wouldn't be like them. But they were mostly kind, even attempting to get me called into their sorority in my sophomore year. I had never expected that as I had never aspired that high. All the beauty queens came from these two sororities; I wasn't popular with young men, so I couldn't enhance their image. In any event, I didn't get in; there was one blackballer. Instead, I joined another sorority more suited to people like me and participated in the activities. The women were likeable, scholarly, musically and artistically accomplished, jolly, and sporting, but not conventionally pretty and popular.

I joined the College choir. I've always sung. I sang as a child, then during my junior high and high school years I sang alto in the school choir. I went to All-State Chorus. I was the alto chosen to sing at the annual Teachers' Convention. When they said they needed a second soprano, I sang that part instead. I had no idea I was a soprano until I entered college. While there, the Music Professor gave me free lessons, the occasional solo until the graduating class of women soloists left, then the lead soloist position. Apart from a few breaks, I have been singing ever since.

I graduated summa cum laude. When I began teaching, I knew I would never be a particularly good high school teacher. I am too pedantic. While I knew my subject matter,

I lacked that combination of cheer leader, charismatic leader and entertainer. So, after the 2 years, I entered graduate school. I could have done something else, but once made a teacher...

I graduated with an MA in English while teaching freshman English as a Graduate Assistant, then one year as a sessional lecturer teaching that same course while waiting for my fiancé to finish his dissertation. I considered applying for a PhD, but there comes a time when you have a choice to make. I didn't fall into marriage. The larger decisions in my life have been conscious choices. I never thought that anybody would propose marriage to me. I had been warned and conditioned all my adolescent years that I was going to be an "old maid" because I wasn't pretty or popular and I didn't have money or position. Moreover, I lacked a cultured background; all I knew was my family culture. As you know, for an adolescent of the 1950s, marriage was the highest ideal for a young woman to strive for. To be married was to be made complete. At least we still knew that marriage took an awful lot of hard work. We didn't have our eyes shut on that issue but we did believe—we did believe that marriage was forever. Once you said "Yes" that was it! There was never any, "Well, maybe not," later on. I made the conscious choice, then, to accept my marriage proposal. And by accepting, I also accepted the fact that I would be living as an expatriate—exiled from my mountains and my family.

What has happened since is everything and nothing. I have not gotten a PhD. I have not made any academic contributions to society except briefly as a grader in the English Department, editing my husband's papers, or making assessments and proffering criticisms of his students' theses. I've kept just a little finger in that pot, but only as an ex-officio type of editor. Professionally you could say I went to fallow field. I have not earned money except for a small stipend as a grader, and while a member of the Opera chorus.

I enquired about teaching when we arrived in Canada, but in the Province at that time I virtually would have been required to begin the education program again. I knew something about my personality—how useless it was for me to teach in the secondary classroom, anyway—so it was my conscious choice not to return to public education. It was not worth my time and my trouble. I knew I was capable of doing other things. And then when the children came, their needs became my chief concern, and they demanded unending commitment on my part.

I was a product of my own culture, and the societal ideals of the time. My husband's and my assumptions of a married woman's role were in absolute accord. We both believed that the mother took care of the feeding, the caring, and the educating of the children, while the father went to work. That being our position, I never thought of professional advancement after that. Instead, I became a volunteer, a choral singer, and a church soloist. I did quite a lot, it's just that I never received any money for it.

I began singing as soon as we arrived in Canada. I had to do something. I'd already tried

pottery and didn't like it at all! I saw that the annual auditions were being held for a choral group, so I auditioned. Four years later, this choral director required additional voices for an opera production. I became a member of the Opera chorus then for 10 years. For several years I sang in both choruses. I left the choral group for a time after a viral infection hospitalized me—a virus that I now think was progressive.

I was in my early 40s when I became more involved at our church and remember being scared to death when given the position of Director of Stewardship without my ever having done anything around the church except sing. This minister simply told me that there was no way that I wasn't going to do a good job. I guess I was afraid of letting him down. At that time, I had all the children's activities too, of course—piano, ballet, swimming, gymnastics. Actually, I was their taxi service until in my mid-50s.

In many ways I have outstretched anything that I would have thought possible for myself. It takes many years to gain confidence in what one can do and to see possibilities. None of these things actually came easily, either, because there was nothing about my childhood that was confidence building. All the church activities were the result of having my arm twisted by a very charismatic, proactive minister. Homemakers were an easy target. I was an unemployed body who didn't go out to work every day. I don't think I realised what potential I actually had! If, as a young woman, I had been told, "Well, these are all the things you will do," I would never have believed it.

As the new Director of Stewardship at my church, I discovered I was an excellent fundraiser. In fact, for one national project I was told that I had raised more money personally than any other congregational member across Canada. I was successful in assisting another person in re-activating a long-lapsed women's volunteer group. I worked with that organization for many years, again fundraising to supply specific items for that institution. I worked for several years raising money for students. I declined a similar request when approached by another organization.

Then, in my mid-40s, I was asked to design stained-glass windows for our church. I had never done anything like this. Told only "small, simple designs" were needed, I agreed, thinking this meant one pane at a time, as the small-paned windows needed replacing. I didn't realise what the project was going to develop into! In the end I was creating designs for not only every pane of glass but also seeing that each pane together formed an overarching design for the entire window. But I found myself enjoying that project sufficiently so that when another church representative approached me, I designed the stained glass for their church as well. That was a very exciting project and much, much more complex. I approached it totally differently. The windows were the gothic style and the entire sanctuary lent itself to a tryptich treatment. Each window could reflect an entire theme which involved research. That was not the last project. I saw an across-Canada competition advertised in our national church magazine asking for members of our denomination to submit a stained-glass design for windows. I think several designers

submitted a proposal. As I was reasonably competent, locally known, with an amateur's price, the design was accepted. That design was my most massive and most challenging as the windows covered two storeys—I pulled the one design down to cover them both. My last stained-glass was a small commissioned project.

I have written two church-specific history books. My first was actually while I was completing the first series of stained-glass windows. The person who had accepted the task of writing the church history book the previous year had accomplished exactly nothing. Our minister came to me and said, "Ellen, we're in a real bind." I had barely 5 weeks to gather all the data and write the book if to meet the publication deadline. I got loaded down with all of the files of the church archives and we hastily struck a committee to gather information from various additional sources. I wrote the entire history book longhand with all of the information row upon row in our home. All this while I was keeping the family together, cooking the meals, singing in the church choir and in a large choral group.

My church activities became heavier and heavier; finally, following 10 years on the Stewardship Board—6 years as Director, 4 years as Assistant Director, I became ill. My illness began in the Fall of 1988; I had a breakdown in the Fall of 1989. Even though I realised I should lessen my involvement in volunteer work, that didn't stop me from accepting the role of Public Relations Director for 4 years when I left the Stewardship Board, even though sick!

One responsibility as Public Relations director was a monthly newsletter. While I was director, it was a sizable news magazine of anywhere between 24-34 pages an issue. I wrote an editorial for each publication and did a lot of the art work as this was before desktop publishing. At the same time, as a further church anniversary project, I became part of a committee struck to investigate the possibility of installing a new organ. After researching for several months, we presented our report and recommendation. This was now in the early 1990s and again I found myself doing the lion's share of the fundraising. We raised the entire amount (\$179,365.50) from private funding. So I've done quite a lot, and as I said, I wasn't being paid for any of it. My life didn't stop when I stopped being a professional.

I had already left the Opera chorus before this time. There were several reasons. I was the female steward and began to see how deviously management was manipulating me for their purposes. I was also being typecast into old-lady roles and I was only in my early 40s. I felt they weren't seeing me as a singer among singers, but rather as an old singer amongst young singers. I resented that. As my health at that time also made standing for the long staging rehearsals almost impossible, I decided 10 years was enough. Then, after a break of 2-1/2 years, I auditioned and returned to the choral group I had left in 1975. I have been singing with them now for 21 years.

I now have an illness that is essentially untreatable. It's certainly not curable. Essentially the only way you can treat the symptoms is to be very careful. As I've gotten older I've

become more careful about how I stress my body. I've curtailed activities and I select more low-profile projects. In that sense I've turned in upon myself. I no longer go running. I guess there was a time when it was repulsive for me to stay home. Perhaps I felt that I was indeed an indispensable person, that I could make a contribution that other people didn't have the time for or weren't willing to do; my volunteer work and my self-imposed duties were my "red badge of courage," my identity. I took on a work identity in volunteer work much as a man takes on the identity of the work that he does for monetary gain. The important point here is that now I no longer cling to that idea of importance. My deeds or accomplishments shall stand or fall on how others view them. I'm not sure that they matter to me now.

I was out almost every night of the week, attending a Bible study, Board Meetings, choir or choral rehearsals. I'm no longer serving on a dozen committees the way I used to do. I am no longer Ellen, "joe-jobber," "go-fer," "girl-Friday," the church "flunky," the accomplisher of anything and everything. I have been forced to look at my identity again, to re-identify myself. I found it especially hard at first to adjust to being at home alone. Our children, young adults now, weren't around except for when they returned from class or brought friends in.

I didn't find very much to do until I started thinking: "Alright, now you're entering another phase of your life. You can become a little shut-in lady in a mink coat (or "a welfare case in a mink coat" as our minister said of an elderly congregational member), or you can continue to do as much as you can do and find some way of being satisfied staying at home." I began looking at the threads in my life that I'd let drop when I went away to school, married, became a mother, and involved myself in the caregiving of other people. Now I am taking care of not only my body but also of my emotional and spiritual well-being. It has taken me a couple of years to refocus. I've gone back now to drawing and some other craft-type things I did when I was younger. I'm seeing what my hands can teach me now. I spend quiet time reading. Rarely do I read serious literature. I have read a lot of theological writings, so I do read for knowledge as well as for pleasure, but I largely read for entertainment. Now it has become less important to be intellectual. I find it really doesn't matter what I read or what I'm doing with my hands; that's not really what's going on, what's going on is really an interior re-creation of myself.

My friends have been my friends for many years and I've been very fortunate that I've been able to maintain contact with the ones who matter the most to me. They are very diverse, unique individuals. I rely on them so much as a sisterhood for mutual support. It's interesting, too, that as their lives expand I could feel sorry for myself and see my life as contracting. But I don't feel that way really. I feel more enriched inside even while apparently achieving less than before. I'm still involved in my choral singing and the church choir. I no longer attend the Bible studies. I've discovered that I don't mind being at home any more. That doesn't make my house any neater.

At the moment I am working on a lengthy project. I finished a needlepoint picture. I've

picked up painting again, although not water colors—I've always been afraid of water colors because they're so delicate, and it's so easy to wreck what you're doing and I don't know what I'm doing. I've just decided that for a while I will do just what occurs to me, whether I achieve anything at all. It is the "inner well" where I sit that is more important to me. If I paint a picture and it's a flop then so what. It's the process itself that seems to be the reward. I suppose I will get involved in a few more projects just so I don't become that "welfare case in the mink coat."

What I think I'm doing now is preparing myself for the possibility of becoming even less mobile and less capable as I age. I might be fortunate. I might never become a shut-in, but a part of me says, "Alright, if you were shut in, what would you still do?" Maybe I'm throwing out ammunition right now, you know, cannonballs of courage, stacking them against the fear of uselessness. I don't feel despair. Right now I am feeling more at peace. Of course I've had depression. One can't live with unremitting pain for long periods without getting distressed about how one feels, but despair? No. I think that despair is an un-Christian attitude.

I would like to be remembered as a person who has loved and been loved. I am an expatriate—there has never been a clear fit in a clear space for me. I have the normal aspirations of retirement people. I would like to have the physical and monetary freedom to travel, to re-explore my own country and more of this one. I would like to stay as active as I can; I don't look forward to a bleak future in a small nursing-home room. But one does not know—if one becomes disabled, one becomes disabled. Basically, I'm satisfied as much as I think I have any right to expect. Nobody was ever promised a life without some trials. So I'm content.

The instinctual layer of her psyche was pointing out to her that she had lost her sovereignty over her own life, and that it was going to be hands and knees work to get it back. To get her Crown back, this woman had to reevaluate her time, her giving, her attentions to others (Estés, 1992, p. 398).

What propelled Ellen forward that first time, out of her "slough of despond" and that of her surroundings when 21 years of age was her intellect, based upon a firm foundation of determination, insightful visualization of possibilities, a self-knowledge of what she was *not*, and a willingness to take a calculated risk. In contrast, her second "slough of despond" in her early 50s appeared to hold minimal future possibilities—and maps she could *not* follow.

Sketching a Portrait: Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Within Ellen's immediate family and sociocultural environment of origin, perhaps literature and poetry, in addition to encouraging Ellen's imaginative and fantasy world, served also as her mentors, reinforcing not only dreamed of future possibilities, but also personalities and lifestyles for her to model.

Ellen lacked viable modelling. From her account, she experienced sociocultural distancing from the children and adolescents of the more economically affluent. These scars remain. Ellen's sister had not succeeded in breaking out of this socioculturally induced confinement, while her parents, lacking adequate education and with lessened optimism and will as they aged, seemed locked into the poverty syndrome. Ellen would be the passport to a lifestyle neither parents had experienced. Ellen balked.

Despite a lack of options, perhaps even a daily view of hopelessness, disappointment, and disillusionment, Ellen chose to ignore her parents' expectations and wishes that she become an artist. She would not have her future identity determined for her. Instead, she determinedly stepped out into her first abyss and chose a series of low-paying, short-term jobs. A pathfinder, Ellen possesses an intellectually- and imaginatively-gifted mind, fuel for an independent spirit and visioning possibilities. Even a series of "paltry-paying" jobs would be preferable to prematurely locking into a career she had no heart for. She refused to become a needs-based artist. She didn't identify herself as an artist, nor would she be manipulated into taking practical responsibility. It seems she *could* not obey the norm, encapsulated perhaps in her comment of "never-quite-belonging," which appears to have motivated her life-long decisions, actions and accomplishments. Ellen dreamed of a college degree, her passport to leaving permanently, the odds stacked against that possibility.

Ellen's core value appears to be the aesthetic; *furthering her education would likely enable sufficient economic flexibility to enhance her creative and aesthetic sense.* Yet, given her background, what could she aspire towards? Pursuing her musical talent had been

economically impossible; her sociocultural position within that small community was "outside;" and her options for further education increasingly remote. Yet, rationalizing and visualizing her future, Ellen was pragmatic. Further education appeared to be the key—towards what ultimate end a minor detail.

When the possibility of a scholarship was offered, Ellen, aware of her time away from studies and conceivably conscious of possible peer and adult ridicule should she fail, chose to risk. The downside of this scholarship was its narrow field. Ellen, like so many women of this era, would teach! But, as with several women in this study, that teaching-requirement *was* the passport to further education, and the excitement of a university, even if outside one's coveted field of interest. Intrinsically motivated, having a purpose (to leave her adolescent environment) and a goal (to pursue "an education" in order to become a "self-sustaining adult"), Ellen entered college. In accomplishing this goal, she experienced vulnerability, isolation, and loneliness in at times embarrassingly unfamiliar socioeconomic and sociocultural surroundings before graduating.

The frustration and feelings of being different and "never quite belonging" continued through college. Ellen and her fellow roommates faced the reciprocal dilemma of the prejudice inherent in class-consciousness, and her lack of social finesse that the barrier of inadequate economic resources creates. While Ellen was intellectually their equal, aesthetically she had not had the opportunities to develop the necessary and essential skills-base in cultural pursuits, nor had she acquired the natural grace of language, decorum and poise one absorbs within one's community as a socioculturally privileged child and adolescent.

Intellectually, Ellen applied herself to her studies; aesthetically, to her voice and choral work; and culturally, determined to learn from her experience by carefully observing the social milieu. Placed in the top sorority wing with the "beauty queens" of social prestige and cultured class, Ellen, in reverting to the third person pronoun during the interview, revealed

the scar-tissue of her past humiliation, embarrassment and distance from the others not only economically but socially. Although bridging some differences, she remained "outside," somewhat included, perhaps the most obvious example being her answering to a diminutive form of her surname. Her given name was not used. She could not *quite* bridge that social milieu. However, Ellen was included in a sorority "more suited to people like me," that reveals her sense of a self. The women in this sorority were "likeable, scholarly, musically and artistically accomplished, jolly, and sporting, but not conventionally pretty and popular." Astutely, Ellen also chose to concentrate her energies on her academic pursuits, from my observation, with three purposes in mind.

While Ellen, as she said, had chosen English over History as her major "because it was easier," this again appears to have been a deliberated choice. Ellen's passport towards her future was the academic highway, possibly triple-pronged. The first, and the reason Ellen gave, was accessing a future (to leave poverty, boredom, disillusionment, and a loss of hope behind). Unmentioned was the heightened sociocultural respect and positive regard she likely would receive from peers and home community, together with respect from the women in the dormitory, her sorority, and her choral group. Third, it would heighten her personal sense of worth. Ellen graduated *summa cum laude*. She had achieved her first goal. By placing her future in her academic success, Ellen had now left her former social-support system, and it could be argued, stood at a personal crossroads somewhat in limbo. Her former sociocultural identification would never again quite fit with situations on the unfamiliar road that lay ahead. Professionally, Ellen was required to teach the following 2 years. She did not consider herself an effective high school teacher, as "too pedantic" rather than "charismatic." *Who* she intended becoming then possibly became Ellen's immediate dilemma and challenge. She applied, was accepted, and entered graduate studies.

Future Choices

"Inside one's natural and social origin, however, is the embryo of a genuine individual struggling to be born" (Frye, 1991, p. 13). As Ellen assessed the odds of that scholarship

exam, the obstacles of her college years, and ultimately excelled in her academic, aesthetic and social accomplishments, so Ellen pragmatically assessed her marriage proposal. She "could respect and accept him, even though she would be exiled from all moorings." Living in Canada, one may assume she would now rebuild a life according to her intentions: acknowledging some parts, omitting others. Her marriage possibly, too, resolved her future. She was not over-enthralled with teaching, even in a college setting. Marriage appealed; it was socially applauded, one belonged; as well, it was obviously a further sociocultural and socioeconomic distancing from her former lifestyle.

Her husband's income has enabled her to work as an unpaid professional in areas of her choice. Financially, she could choose greater personal flexibility, which she did. Shortly after arriving in Canada, as Ellen relates, her husband encouraged her community participation, perhaps to facilitate her appreciating his country, possibly for her to continue sharing her interests and scholastic abilities he had come to recognize and appreciate during the completion of his doctoral degree. In the development of her talents, I feel le Guin's description of her marital partnership encapsulates Ellen's.

He is not my wife; but he brought to marriage an assumption of mutual aid as its daily basis, and on that basis you can get a lot of work done. Our division of labor was fairly conventional; I was in charge of house, cooking, the kids, and novels, because I wanted to be, and he was in charge of being a professor, the car, the bills, and the garden, because he wanted to be. (Le Guin, 1997, p. 224)

Essential, le Guin emphasizes, has been his generosity: "If I needed help he gave it without making it into a big favor, and—this is the central fact—he did not ever begrudge me the time I spent writing, or the blessing of my work" (1997, p. 224).

One notes that, within their marriage, Ellen's personal aspirations, interests, activities and goals seem participatory rather than threatening to *his* life. In the main, their marriage may be viewed as one of respect and regard for mutually acquired interests *and* personal differences. Ellen alludes to some relationship crises. Until her breakdown, she largely took care of, and carried the stress of, these. Then, in 1989, a combination of family and singing

obligations, together with ever-increasing church responsibilities and deadlines triggered a massive burnout and Ellen's stress-related chronic illness.

A Personality Thriving: "a Series of Little Epiphanies"

Intimacy and isolation. During her 30s, Ellen concentrated on her marriage, babies, toddlers, acclimatising herself to the Canadian way of life, and found her singing outlet. Since experiencing the personal recognition, encouragement and mentorship of her music maestro, Ellen's singing, to my mind, became the *emblem* of her aesthetic Self. Academically, Ellen selectively viewed her future options. Furthering her former academic or professional pursuits seems to have received only half-hearted enquiries—almost in the line of a duty call—and relief when informed of the conditions she personally would *not* meet.

Generativity in intimacy and volunteer labour. Nearing 40, however, with a husband preoccupied in his career, Ellen's confinement to a monotonous and socially isolating daily routine of after-school activities and household chores was not generative enough. Ellen sought additional involvements, choosing volunteer rather than paid work, primarily within her church. Since her marriage, Ellen laughingly commented, she has done "everything and nothing." Granted, if a person's value is measured by take-home earned income, Ellen had failed her obligations, and had wasted her scholarship by simply becoming a "fallow field" as she said. Perhaps, though, the current work ethic of personal success, being measured by dollars earned, could be viewed as a patriarchal construct, a short-sighted selfishness.

On the contrary, an overview of Ellen's lifestyle and lifeworld reveals how she used her academic skills both within her home, the university, and her church; how she used her artistic skills in community; and how she enhanced her children's cultural experiences by exposing them to various venues closed to her as a child. While Ellen may have followed the well-worn path of the volunteer, she selected specific areas. Do I sense a disillusionment and sadness now at the middle-life devaluing of a women's choices she, her friends and

acquaintances have experienced within marriage—some, abuse; some, divorce; some, lessened opportunities? For “Everything” possibly indicates a woman’s *personal* sense of self and value, “Nothing” a woman’s *sociocultural and psychosocial* exploitation.

Ellen was 41 when she became more heavily involved in her church activities. During this decade she thrived as her minister recognised and encouraged her talent, utilised and extended her intellectual resources, and affirmed her personality (outgoing, reliable, intense and enthusiastic). As she said, Ellen exceeded her expectations in all areas. She was taxiing her children to their endeavours, reviewing her husband’s and his graduate students’ writings, continuing her singing interests, and diversifying her network of connections as she broadened in experience, scope and interests. *Obviously, on a personal level, she was finding she had leadership and fundraising, artistic and musical skills; contextually within these social spaces, she felt valued, validated and included.*

The Spectre of Ageism

Then, not yet in her mid-40s, as a member of the Opera chorus, Ellen found herself being typecast into “old lady roles.” Ellen felt her accomplishments as a singer trivialised, negatively exposed age-wise, devalued and lessened as a person. She had several options. She chose to leave the Opera chorus and successfully audition for her former choral group. Fortunately, her church was valuing and validating her contributions, so what was hurtful and humiliating to Ellen was in one segment of her life only. Ellen’s Essence of Self remained intact, though possibly somewhat bruised.

One woman’s experience. Within this conservative church setting, as the years unfolded, Ellen’s contribution seemed to have been regarded more as a service than as her gift. Ellen became less and less of her Self as she was subtly “normalised” into duty, obligation and functionality. Maslow recognised this as a problem of the more creative and autonomous, spontaneous, and aesthetically gifted persons:

The normal adjustment of the average, common sense, well-adjusted man

implies a continued successful rejection of much of the depths of human nature, both conative and cognitive. To adjust well to the world of reality means a splitting of the person. It means that the person turns his back on much in himself because it is dangerous. But it is now clear that, by so doing, he loses a great deal too, for these depths are also the source of all his joys, his ability to play, to love, to laugh, and, most important for us, to be creative. (Maslow, 1962, p. 142)

Through this decade, as her minister requested more and more from her, Ellen accepted, and accomplished, heavier and heavier deadlines. Then in her mid-40s, Ellen was offered her ultimate challenge that refocused her abilities towards her artistic talents. Would she design stained-glass windows? She received another request. Would she collect, collate, write, and have published, her church's 60-year history within the month? Ellen accepted both challenges, both projects successful. However, some 5 years following the completion of these deadlines, a family crisis occurred. Possibly this negative stress together with the intensity required of further church-related artistic and fundraising concentrations overwhelmed her, and Ellen collapsed. She was, by then, 51 years old.

Nevertheless, Ellen's breakdown, amidst multiple deadlines at her church and a major crisis at home, was the inception and pivotal point towards what has become a reidentification of *who* Ellen, the person, is. Ellen's solution was to begin her introspective journey into her "inner well." She began her journey while completing her third stained-glass project, which demanded precise detailing and spiritual research. While her hands were busy, an affective "interior re-creation" was in process. From this point on, Ellen appears to have concentratedly immersed herself in the artistic and the spiritual dimensions of her life. During this time, as she said, she momentarily stepped out of her choral involvement.

Ellen's anomic crisis. Ellen's second crisis, her second "slough of despond" descended over the span of that year. *In reality, this "breakdown" to my mind signalled her spiritual turning-point, still in process.* Now Ellen, for the first time, was thwarted and blocked. She termed it "giving myself all away" and now needing to return to her "inner well." Her issues involved the present-day sociocultural and psychosocial spaces of her home, her church, and

her historical sociocultural and psychosocial memory spaces of home and college.

In her home, Ellen faced the emotional stress alone initially, as was her role; to cope, her husband, as his agreed-upon role, busied himself away. None were aware of Ellen's fragility until the crisis occurred. It was what followed during the next few years that created the anomie and the challenge. A diagnosis, medication, and conversation resolved the home situation; her husband, becoming more aware, became more sensitive. Perhaps unanticipated, Ellen's church institution proved the more challenging.

For the following 4 years, as the new Public Relations Director, Ellen created the art work and wrote a monthly editorial column for the church newsletter. She worked on stained-glass design. But a shift had occurred, possibly selectively pursued: Ellen was now primarily focusing on the intuitively aesthetically creative rather than the predominantly cerebral. She also was escalating (or being escalated) toward lessening her public profile. Meanwhile, it seems, Ellen was being conditioned within her church into "old(er)."

But Ellen will not be forced into what she is *not*, or not ready for. She had changed her focus from primarily a business orientation to the creative. Correspondingly, Ellen downsized herself when *she* was ready. Once again, as in her adolescent years, *she* is determining her own pathway, although Ellen's body is now dictating her needs while Ellen rediscovers her Essence of Self. Ellen can no longer will her body into compliance.

Ellen's challenge. "However limited life with others may be, the way out is always the way within; a personal solitude and inquiry awaits that is the only true path to our unfolding destiny" (Moustakas, 1995, p. 57). The issues for Ellen appear to have been three-fold. During her mid/late adolescence, Ellen had dreamed of her future, as a *Self* determining "a life that had possibilities." From the moment Ellen received her scholarship, she reconstructed that Self towards who she felt or knew she was. Each success seemingly silenced the internalized stigmatizing mind tapes of her adolescent and early-adult years. As

an educated adult, she would be, and has become, an accomplished woman, economically secure, socially accepted and admired.

Throughout her 40s, creative and analytical, comfortable with chaos while honing detail, innovative yet reliable, with the ability to absorb herself in a task through to completion, Ellen was thriving. Her lifestyle belied her earlier childhood and adolescent socioeconomic context. As with each major choice in her life, each stepping stone, to this point, Ellen had exceeded her opinion and assessment of herself and her capabilities. Entering her 50s, that image seems to have been subtly scrutinized and jeopardised within a Christian church community. *Once again, one sees Ellen confronted with the issues of Belongingness and Esteem contextually imposed upon her, of sub-texts within her Self reactivated. Ellen was to become her problem; the problem institutionally enculturated and intentionally imposed.* She had too high a profile—at least in the eyes of some congregational members—which the minister, whatever his reason, chose not to defend.

Ellen was confronting an abyss, but this time basically in isolation. There was no Senator, Music Professor, or sorority. The minister who had encouraged her involvement through that decade of multi-dimensional activity had left. The issues of esteem and “generativity/stagnation” were being *socioculturally imposed and constructed* within her church institution, eliciting Ellen’s anxiety over recognition and appreciation for her contribution to a body of people she had come to trust, appreciate, and spiritually identify with. For approximately 30 years (20 years within the one church), Ellen had experienced, so she thought, acceptance, inclusion and recognition of her self-worth and validation for her accomplishments. Did Ellen sense an aloofness now by persons she thought had understood, respected and *liked* her? Why, for example, a label such as “the church flunky?”

Ageism: Reconstructing a Woman’s Institutional Image.

Witness the comparative youngster overheard in an Adelaide office decrying an older woman in a prestige position: “Wouldn’t you think she’d step aside and make room for the younger women?!” (Arnold, n.d.)

The old(er) woman cannot see her self because her age is magnified by society into her only and monolithic identity, which defaces her. (Frueh, 1994, p. 275)

"Old(er)" is a social construct as is "adolescence." The undermining and deconstruction of Ellen's sense of Self was subtle. Ellen's perceived strengths, the qualities of her Self that had given her confidence were targeted. In retrospect, *how* did Ellen perceive that Self?

Perhaps I felt that I was indeed an indispensable person, that I could make a contribution that other people didn't have the time for or weren't willing to do; my volunteer work and my self-imposed duties were my Red Badge of Courage, my identity. I took on a work identity in volunteer work much as a man takes on the identity of the work that he does for monetary gain. (Ellen)

Ellen needed to be molded into "acting her age," first viewing herself as old(er), then modelling that internalised image. This female rite of passage occurred within a Protestant Lutheran male-clergy-only religious institution that had adopted corporate managerial practices during the 1980s.

How was this attempted? In her early 50s, Ellen heard demeaning labels. Within her church, language, strategically placed and "altruistically" applied, targeted her vulnerabilities. As Ellen during her college years had used language to identify her shift in her sociocultural and socioeconomic reality and spaces, language was now used to lessen her Self and social validation within a segment of that space. The subtle verbal devaluation and imagery targetting her hidden anxieties and vulnerabilities, in combination with work overload, to my mind, revived mind tapes thought eradicated. *The issue for Ellen now became a conflict between Ellen's internal sense of Self and her valued institutional-body's analysis of her external personality presentation and artistic representation of that Self.*

In writing on the Esteem needs, Maslow accurately saw these as reciprocal between the person and his/her cultural affiliations—personally in opportunities to use one's skills and talents, and culturally, as a part of one's persona, recognised and appreciated (Maslow, 1954). Erikson, too, felt this is crucial for the individual and his/her *society's* developmental adjustment, especially from adolescence to death, as cyclically and collectively each

individual weaves the social fabric (Erikson, 1968).

Devaluation: social spaces and time zones. Task overload, subversive labelling and selective snubbing have been the institutional breaching strategies of downsizing—home and religious community not excepted. Confused, the individual appears to have a problem. Possibly this was Ellen's experience from 1988 to 1993. For example, it was Ellen, already multi-tasking and fund-raising, who was approached when a delegated person defaulted on a project and the ministers found themselves "in a real bind." And, as Ellen entered her 50s, shortly before her stress-related illness, she became the target of labels.

Devaluation: verbal power. Ellen once again experienced the devaluation of negative labels, "well-meaningly" intended. During her adolescence and young adulthood, Ellen had internalised the reasons for her marginalization. Succinctly, she lacked social class and quality. On the College campus, Ellen's Self-descriptors changed from "a hick in scrubbies" and "a little curd in a great big dob of very heavy cream" to affiliation with women members of a sorority as "likeable, scholarly, musically and artistically accomplished, jolly, and sporting . . ." A mentor, a Music Department professor, affirmed these by giving her free voice lessons and selecting her as lead soloist. His confidence in her abilities and personality counterpointed one Education professor's later commenting on Ellen's *summa cum laude* as "an overachiever." Entering middle adulthood, Ellen, justifiably proud of her accomplishments, of "outstretching anything I would have even thought for myself," heard she was being named a "jo-jobber," a "go-fer," a "Girl Friday," and the church "flunky."

A mature society, in contrast, understands that its primary aim is to develop a genuine individuality in its members. . . . Religious organizations are much more bound than the better secular ones to what I have called the primitive form of society, the supremacy of social authority over the individual. (Frye, 1991, pp. 8, 10)

Asked whether she had received recognition for her involvement, her reply was laughter and "Are you kidding?" Did Ellen recognise that an institution perhaps had acted as surrogate parents; that she had assimilated an institutional rather than parental neediness? Ellen's crisis stemmed from an overload of tasks, a crunch of deadlines, negative labels, and the

script and staging these negative labels evoked in her mind theatre. Had she been "blind-sided" by any individuals she had trusted?

An Identity in Crisis and Recovery

The authorship of oneself as an old(er) woman is serious business. . . . If woman plays absence to man's presence, then old(er) women can be polymorphously perverse by not fading away. (Frueh, 1994, pp. 276-277)

"I am seeing what my hands can teach me now." Ellen's body refused to obey her intellect. Threatened with stagnation and closure of her life for a time brought Ellen to a crossroads. She has chosen to shift beyond the competitiveness of task accomplishment towards a focus on Self knowledge and the significance of relationship. By her own admission, Ellen had spent very little time in solitude, in fact "there was a time when it was repulsive to stay home." As Ellen retrieves her Essence of Self, hears her inner voice, together with that of her minister and her doctor, and, as she immerses herself in loneliness and her reflections and meanderings, Ellen's energy is returning. Her reading has moved beyond theological content to the neutral and creative zone of fantasy escapist reading. After avidly reading and researching medical texts, Ellen, together with her doctor, has chosen her medication. Heeding her body's warning, the hands of this body are now directing her mind and heart through her meandering thoughts, desires, wishes and dreams, seizing what is possible against the worst fears—preparing for contingencies should her body confine her.

"The afternoon of life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life's morning" (Jung, 1933, p. 109). Ellen, I feel, is defining that significance at this point. "Recovering the ability to perceive one's own delights is the best way of rediscovering the sacrificed self even in adulthood" (Maslow, 1962, p. 57). A woman's use of her hands in the traditional ways of crocheting, cooking, gardening, embroidering, and painting, is often her form of meditation and reflection while processing a disquiet or a life loss. These are Ellen's activities currently. The reaction towards Ellen's aging process has become her challenge. But graduating *summa cum laude* followed by the activities and

accomplishments Ellen has had to this point are hardly indicative of a socially isolated and useless future. As recently as 1999, Ellen wrote and published a second church history book, commemorating yet another church anniversary.

Man is ultimately not molded or shaped into humanness, or taught to be human. The role of the environment is ultimately to permit him or help him to actualize his own potentialities, not its potentialities. The environment does not give him potentialities and capacities; he has them in inchoate or embryonic form. (Maslow, 1962, p. 160)

MIRANDA

I always wanted to be a sewing teacher. In fact, I was so adamant that the high school headmaster directed me to the commercial stream in case the teaching option didn't work out. I think he was mindful that if one couldn't go further one still had commercial skills to fall back on which turned out to be quite wise, I suppose, in the long run. Because of my mother's economic situation it wasn't possible for me to attend the Teacher's College. When I left school, I worked at whatever happened to be available and took evening classes at the Adult Education Centre (i.e., TAFE College) to become certified in order to teach sewing. If I couldn't enter Teachers' College, then I would access the adult education system. I would teach adults.

You see, I knew my high school sewing teacher had gotten her Teaching Diploma while teaching in the local high school, but in 1963 when I wanted to do this it was no longer possible. You now went to Teachers' College, you came out of Teachers' College, and you taught. So I worked in an office, taking evening courses in dressmaking. Then, after approximately 3 years, my office hours were cut to part time. But almost at the same time, the high school teacher took sick and I covered her classes for a time. I was now teaching a class in the evening, teaching classes during the day, working in an office part time, and in addition, helping out a neighbor doing housework. Shortly before the high school teacher returned, I was offered a full-time office job, as the secretary was getting married. I remember wondering whether I should stay where I was, exposed to fabrics. I decided I needed the security of a full-time job as I was also getting married. Then I became ill, which necessitated my having to curtail most of the evening activities, one being teaching!

I married when I was 22 years old, and was married a year, I think, when another opportunity arose to teach a night class. So now I was teaching dressmaking some evenings, going to classes other evenings, and working full time during the day. That was an excellent experience, because I was working for a politician and learning a lot of interesting things.

Also, the book work gave me extremely good experience in how to run a business. I was given a lot of scope, a lot of freedom to set up my own system.

When I had completed my adult courses, I approached TAFE to see whether they needed an instructor. At that time they didn't, so I decided to place some advertisements in the stores. On my way to the first store, I bumped into a woman who said she had a list of 10 women who wanted to learn dressmaking. So everything just fell into place.

Approximately 10 years after I had begun working full time in the office, I heard that one could enter Teachers' College as a mature student. I still wanted to teach dressmaking full time. I wanted more than office work. At this time, too, my husband had left his job and he was trying to set up his own business and that wasn't really working out. I calculated that I could afford to go to Teachers' College on the student wage together with my night-class earnings. I applied and was interviewed, but I was so focused on the dressmaking part that I wasn't at all interested in the total Home Economics programme. I didn't even want to know about teaching the other subjects. You can see why I didn't get in. Also, I was competing with the younger women who probably had a much broader focus. But it didn't worry me because I had two other options.

I had noticed that local women were buying elaborate sewing machines but didn't know how to use them. Also, in order to find fabric they travelled to the city. My two options were to open a quality fabric store and to offer classes in how to use their machines to the maximum. A shop became vacant in the town and I just knew it was right! I was now in my early 30s. By now, too, my marriage was beginning to disintegrate. I mean, all hope must have gone for me to use my savings rather than investing it in the home as other couples did. I took my savings and my superannuation, mortgaged the house, and set up the shop. I just went in on sheer intuition; it's like, I knew I could do it! I'd seen enough of peoples' buying patterns. It wasn't easy. I had no idea, then, that our town was not a commercial town, almost as if people didn't have a lot of faith in anything happening. People wished me well, but moral support is not what it takes to make it happen.

The first year was very stressful. While I was trying to make a success of my business, my marriage of 9 years was breaking down more and more. Interestingly, people sensed the direction I needed to take and many suggested I teach stretch sewing. So many women had taken a class, I thought I wouldn't have any women attend mine, but I decided to take the training course. When I got the courage to put the advertisement in the paper, I had about 20 women at the first lesson. I still thought it wouldn't last long, but it lasted 12 years! I suppose the word got around. I mean, I know I teach well. I relate well to people, I explain well, and having had the dressmaking background I have a solid background in fabrics and patterns. But of course, as with all things, your students teach you how to teach. The women came from the surrounding districts. This success gave me enough confidence and enough security to leave a bad marriage. And so, after about 18 months, I had the courage to leave my marriage and could now invest all my energy in my business.

The community reaction was very difficult. At this time, as still, our community area was very much old-ethnic attitudinally. It was children, home, and church activities. Lutheran women didn't get divorced and certainly didn't set up a business! Yet I knew it was right. My husband made it difficult even though he knew the marriage was over. It was the issue of rejection. Whoever leaves is in charge, in control. I guess I thought my life would stay the same. But of course it is not quite the case. This surprised me. The single world is vastly different from the married world. You don't get to socialize with other married couples because women don't let you near their husbands, to put it simplistically. While one enjoys male company, it doesn't mean you're going to run off with someone's husband. I've viewed a lot of insecure married women. It's really a closed community.

I also left the church. I began to do a lot of reading myself about male/female insecure/secure relationships. Probably non-Christian women are much more secure about their sexuality than Christian women. I found many of the Christian women insecure, very protective or possessive of their husbands. I found that very interesting. From the business point of view, I felt I had to be careful, because I also realized my business was primarily female-oriented. Women were supplying my bread and butter. I felt doubly vulnerable then, although it doesn't bother me now. I suppose in the early days I was very, very aware of what was going on. I made friends "outside." I probably spoke with the local doctors if it ever got to the stage of needing to speak to somebody. But I think there were a few women at the time going through the same process. We coped Irish style, "crying into our beer" so to speak. Until one day you stop talking about it and realize it's over.

In any event, I got involved in personal-development activities. It was also at this time that there were other female business owners in the area and we would get together for what we called "girls night out." Our conversation didn't come under the "ladies" type category; it was stimulating. During the 1980s, we also had the opportunity to join the Soroptimist Club, a women's service group. I stayed with that until I resigned recently because I was probably going in just too many directions. I didn't rise extremely high in the ranks but I was certainly a motivating force in its success. Meanwhile, my business thrived. I was teaching factory techniques from a tailoring background. The women became quite confident. Not teacher dependent, they would phone a friend if they had a question. I taught them to do it for themselves. Then I got the Bernina franchise and worked very closely with that Company out of Switzerland. I had absolutely no idea how successful it would be, but, again you just start. I was really feted by them. The last 5 years, though, have been extremely, extremely restless. It's as if I am looking for another direction. I began to have this restless feeling around the age of 44. And knowing what I know now, I can see that if one does not do what one feels strongly about during one's mid-40s, you either make bad judgments or decisions, or almost become self-destructive. Going into a disastrous partnership was a prime example! To this time I had been a career person. Now motherhood and study issues came up. It was also about this time—and this I find extremely interesting—that my mother re-entered our lives.

I have basically done what my mother had wanted to do. My mother had wanted to be a sewing teacher but she didn't have the courage to go against her father's veto. I did it under my own steam you might say, although she supported me initially. When I was young I could use her sewing machine. Later, when I began working, I bought a sewing machine and table and it was like, "Come on, mother, move over, I want to put my sewing machine and table in here." When I was teaching at TAFE, the Whitlam Government came in. Education fees were minimal so my mother decided to take advantage of this and I found she was to be in my class. I was not having that because I felt she'd probably tell me what to do!

Shortly after that, she remarried. Her second husband was very controlling and very concerned her children would want proceeds from the sale of the property. I can remember being very vehement and saying that I could make it on my own, which I did. That was shortly after I had opened my fabric store. I know I was still married at the time.

But when I was 45 or so, her second husband died and the clear communication between brothers and sisters disappeared. It was shortly after she returned that I tried to sell my business to go to university and take visual arts but took in partners instead. Looking back, I feel I lacked some courage at that time. I would say that if I had found the right partner, I would have settled down and had children or taken a visual arts course. But I had no backup financially. I had to earn a living. I can see how married women have more financial freedom. I now realized I'd sacrificed a lot for my successful career and had ignored it. Now I knew what it was costing me. Eventually, one does.

At this time I am experiencing emotional turmoil. I'm finding it very difficult. I have a strong town identity as a business woman and I feel that has been very much my identity. And if I don't have that, what is my identity? I've also found that working with partners has made me extremely fearful. I've not experienced this before. I've not ever been treated this way and of course, the intruder's attempted assault in my home has left me emotionally vulnerable. Having a controlling male as a business partner doesn't help. Because of this partner and the incident in my home, I can't see a future. I'm told it's part of post-traumatic stress. So I just feel, at the moment, pulled in too many directions. A few things need to settle down before things clarify. I'm nearly 50 years old and also feel that everybody must sense that. I never, ever thought it would be an issue. A birthday is not a grieving, you know.

I've always been interested in alternatives, in astrology for instance, in successful women. I am interested in women's power, women's psychology, their development, in promoting their fulfilment, their achievements. But when a woman came into the store the other day she gave me a shock when she said my store was a place where women could come and be themselves. I hadn't heard that for a long time. So many women don't get nurturing at home. They don't get encouragement, instead it is a putdown. Very rarely do women get male support in what they do or in who they are.

I know what has gone on in my fabric store. I've seen the progress many women have made.

This has been a starting point for many, many women, whether it has been into needlework skills, a career, or a new direction. You see it as women's spiritual journey. It shows very much with patchwork quilting, in the theme a woman chooses. Initially, women will do courses for the sake of doing courses. But then you can see they go beyond that. Then they start to select themes. It is a way of seeing yourself. Sometimes their life takes another direction.

And I see the husbands. Some husbands object, some encourage, some compete, some even take their women away from what they are doing either out of jealousy or lack of attention. You see all sorts of things. But it's amazing. Many a time you see that when women are doing these things it's not the skill they are learning. It's what's going on inside. Observing another woman's growth is almost soul destroying. Not having enough time to do something for the self is like giving one's own creativity away. Recently, though, I've picked up knitting. I know it's fairly mindless but it's possibly therapy.

You see, for the last 5 years I have seen other women my age taking new directions away from their full-time work commitments, just at the time when I took in partners. By doing so, I gave up my sewing room which was the shop basement. It was my space! It has been completely taken over. It's as if I've been evicted. I have one little spot. I hadn't realized other peoples' energy or power could be so destructive. And the thing is, you know, they know what they're doing. Although I'm coming to a resolution now, I'm not quite sure what it will be.

We must strive to allow our souls to grow in their natural ways and to their natural depths. The wildish nature does not require a woman to be a certain color, a certain education, a certain lifestyle or economic class ... in fact, it cannot thrive in an atmosphere of enforced political correctness, or by being bent into old burnt-out paradigms. It thrives on fresh sight and self-integrity. It thrives on its own nature. (Estés, 1992, p. 21)

A Profile

Miranda struggled to nurture her soul's growth into its "natural ways and to [its] natural depths" (Estes, 1992, p. 21), especially during her 30s and 40s, and, as she says, is now once again being challenged. I first met Miranda when I returned to Australia for a short visit in 1978 after an absence of 10 years. These were brief, casual conversations as I browsed in her store. It was during an extended visit in 1992 that I learned a little of her esoteric and aesthetic interests. I discovered this in books she loaned me, and in the stimulating

conversations we had as we took several long walks of a Sunday afternoon. I discovered this, too, in her comments on the fabrics in her store, and in her sewing space observed how uniquely and creatively she uses them.

In 1997, again returning for a brief visit, I noticed personally discomforting differences. Physically, Miranda had put on a noticeable amount of weight. She was no longer the sole owner of her business but was now involved in a partnership. The fabrics were very different. I found not only the physical space had changed, but the aesthetic and psychosocial spaces had altered as well. I no longer felt quite comfortable. I remember puzzling over the difference.

Choices and Consequences

Miranda has always known her own mind. During her adolescence, it was her choice to focus on dressmaking. Of the socioeconomic options she thought available to her—clerical, nursing or teaching—Miranda wanted to teach, but only in one area. It was this single-mindedness of purpose that effectively closed her out of a high school academic route because dressmaking was not an academic option. Yet this same single-mindedness of purpose had focused her determination, concentration and potential towards long-term economic self-sufficiency, a laudable community identity and a strong sense of a Self.

A risk-taker, an entrepreneur, and a person of tenacity and courage, at the age of 30, Miranda opened a fabric store and left an unsatisfactory marriage, both actions out of character at that time for a young Lutheran woman. A person who appears to intuit her direction and then logically act, Miranda instigated a separation and divorce from what appears to have been two people living independent, separate lives, she the more economically reliable than he. Nevertheless, from her account, she had not anticipated the reaction of her church community, their discomfort, protocol confusion and her subsequent isolation. Yet, knowing it was a wise decision, she was determined to persevere and succeed. Financially secure, she had been successful in the few classes she had taught and knew the local women through

these classrooms and by observing their buying patterns. It "felt" right because she had begun small, testing the waters, so to speak. Miranda's sociocultural identity was forming.

Miranda tested her mettle, seeking new associates and friendships, independently exploring eclectic and esoteric readings and options, seeking the pathway of self-knowledge. These readings, activities, and friendships subtly shifted her former lifeworld attitudes and values away from religious dogma, away from the traditional religious attitudes and values towards a more wholistic spiritual perspective where female power and energy holds a viable place and space. Not only did Miranda create that place and space for herself, but also for the women who enjoy browsing in her store and attending her classes.

Despite her success, she did not avoid or ignore her vague disquiet as she neared her mid-40s. She elected to undertake a moratorium. While Erikson applied this term to the adolescent, referring to himself as "an artist then, which can be a European euphemism for a young man with some talent, but nowhere to go" (1964, p. 20), I am by no means implying that a woman entering middle adulthood is searching for her identity. Rather, as in Miranda's instance, a *selection* is made from an overview of her life experiences, a preview of challenges held in abeyance, and her present reality. Rather than searching for meaning or meaningfulness in life, which seems more "I" centred, I have observed women using this disquiet more as a process of reflection upon personal accountability of a life lived to that moment, then an assessment and selection towards an anticipated *enlarged* generatively-centred I/Thou future. Unfortunately, when Miranda chose a business partnership, her opportunity to further her education appears to have been subtly obstructed. Nor did she avoid what, in my opinion, is the attempted closure of some women's social spaces as they near the end of their reproductive cycle. From her account, from a number of town women's comments, and from personal observation, Miranda was experiencing obstruction in her work spaces—aesthetic, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

In her mid-40s, seeking further challenge once again, it seems Miranda no longer wanted to

begin with small steps. Given her independent spirit and her personal lifeworld, what I found puzzling was why she not only had entered a business partnership, but had accepted a partnership with a married couple. Moreover, this husband's former two professions had been each male-dominant and authority-based. Also, considering the release of time a partnership enabled, why hadn't Miranda begun university classes on a part-time basis? Now, a few weeks away from her 50th birthday, Miranda was experiencing a restlessness and some disquiet. What had happened?

Miranda's Dilemma

In 1997, in retrospect, Miranda felt she had lacked courage in her mid-40s and had made the wrong choice. I observed by her use of words, her voice tone and her physical bearing that now she felt she was stagnating, while her female business associates and women taking her classes were doing "something for the self." *They* were exploring new areas and enlarging their creative potentiality. Meanwhile, *she* was experiencing her reality as "almost soul-destroying in a way." Miranda seems not to have experienced this before. So, distancing herself from this painful realization, Miranda objectified herself, "It is like one seems to be giving one's own creativity away to somebody else." Intuitively, she had focused her dilemma. Perhaps understandably, she then safeguarded her psyche. She rationalized. "Married women have more financial freedom." Of course, her former female business friends had easier choices: *they* had a husband, whereas *she* was single. She needed to support herself, they did not. Next, she targetted her personality (her single-mindedness). "I knew what it was costing me. But eventually it comes up and raps on the door." Yet at the same time, Miranda recognized many married women's lack of an independent identity, or lack of a husband's interest, support, appreciation, or encouragement. She again answered herself: her classes were a meeting place where women "could do their own thing" and "nurture" each other. Many "don't get encouragement from home, instead it is usually a putdown. *Very* rarely do women get male support in what they do or in who they are." Recognizing her then lack of focus, her emotional overload, Miranda clarified her dilemma. "I'm finding it very difficult being involved in the business—I have become a strong town

identity. I feel that that's been very much my identity. And if I don't have that, what *is* my identity?" Inadvertantly, Miranda had answered her Self.

Listening to her ruminations on her past choice, I observed the concern that by selling her store and beginning a visual arts degree Miranda feared losing her respected place within her community. If that happened, then who *was* Miranda? *Who* was that Self? Her concern was a legitimate one. Whereas an adolescent, in order to construct his/her identity, risks in the process of becoming a Self, that same adolescent Self is a virtual psychosocial blank slate. Miranda's problem and challenge appeared to be the opposite. She perceived her identity as a social self. She *is* a successful business woman, respected in the community. In her mind, she risked sociocultural nonentity should she make the wrong choice. Yet without her creative energy, she would stagnate—her ideas, projects and nurturing of others would suffer, her business would bankrupt.

I observed Miranda now knowingly standing at another of life's crossroads, with a difficult decision facing her. However, this time Miranda seemed stuck. She now knew she had made a wrong choice. Not only was the business partnership not working, it was progressively becoming more unworkable. While Miranda's logical mind recognized this negative work environment, her intuitive voice seemed silent. It appeared that Miranda, for possibly the first time, had lost her focus. From her mid-40s, when her business became a partnership, to her present moment, Miranda's lifeworld as she viewed it had become chaotic. And worse, what perhaps was happening to her identity?

Fortunately, while Miranda for a time may be confused, or even blocked, she does not seem to sabotage herself. She intuits, reflects, then acts decisively, bringing to mind Erikson's "ethical rule of adulthood," which is "to do to others what will help them, even as it helps you, to grow" (1978, p. 11). As mentioned, she had taken a non-conventional route when she had left her marriage, unexpectedly finding herself on the "outside" of her former social circles. She had successfully bridged that passage. Why was she currently experiencing such

difficulty in reaching a decision considering this former position of strength?

Personal Anomie and the Impact of Negativity

Exploitation exists where a divided function is misused by one of the partners involved in such a way that for the sake of his pseudo-aggrandisement he deprives the other partner of whatever sense of identity he had achieved, of whatever integrity he had approached. The loss of mutuality which characterizes such exploitation eventually destroys the common function and the exploiter himself (Erikson, 1963, p. 418).

Once Miranda separated from her 9-year marriage, set up her business, and then divorced, she progressively appears to have enlarged her Self by developing her latent potentialities. Finding new friendship circles, she had gone from strength to strength in the aesthetic, intellectual, business, social, and economic spheres. Approximately 15 years later, and thriving, Miranda wanted a further challenge; she had focused her interest. She wished to challenge herself on a university campus, this time exploring her intellectual capacities within the aesthetically creative field of visual arts. Could Miranda have begun the program on a part-time basis, incorporating her classroom knowledge into her own workshops? Or was she experiencing some anxiety about an aspect of her life yet unlived, and the time for exploration short? Did she perhaps feel she was no longer on the cutting edge of change as she observed a number of her female business colleagues leaving their businesses and changing their direction? Was it the social changes ushered in with the inception of the 1990s? Throughout her young adulthood and until this moment, Miranda had intuited, observed, then opened up her options by stretching her limits and risking the odds.

Whatever her motive, Miranda placed her business on the market. When approached with a different offer, she instead agreed to enter into a partnership with a couple. During the following 5 years, Miranda experienced three traumatic events that dissipated her exuberant spirit and vibrant energy. The first two came close together: her mother returned, causing a to-be-expected change in family dynamics, and Miranda took in a married couple as business partners. The third trauma happened several years later when an intruder broke into

her home and attempted an assault. It appears from situations that shall follow, that one key issue confronting Miranda as she approached her 50th year was a fear of returning to a life and personality which existed prior to that of a successful business woman (hence disquiet at her mother's return). However, while Miranda saw similarities between her mother's unfulfilled aspirations and her fulfilling that same dream, yet, from Miranda's account, her mother had encouraged Miranda's aspirations. Her mother "had virtually been taken out of the arena" shortly before Miranda left her marriage and had now returned, but that did not appear to be the key issue. Since her adolescence, Miranda had known what she had wanted and had succeeded with integrity intact. She had known who she was and until the last few years her intuition had been her motivational source. *Now Miranda appeared to be struggling to maintain that inner identity, her unique Self. The anomie Miranda was experiencing was almost a paralysis of logic and affect, with her body as the spokesperson.* Her self-confidence and psychic wellbeing had diminished. It seems that, for the first time, her psychic boundaries were being violated. Her female energy appears to have been targeted. It seems that at first Miranda largely ignored the subtly slow, but patterned, undermining of her confidence, recognized in retrospect.

Miranda recognizes a woman may lose "her identity upon marriage," and that for some males the title *Ms* threatens how and where one places a woman socioculturally. But did she realise that those same males are also present in a social or work environment? Was that her blind spot? It seems that *while within herself Miranda was attempting to focus and implement her next challenge, her female autonomy was being undermined and exploited in her workspace.* Rather than Miranda's business acumen and creativity being shared, it was being usurped, and she was being controlled.

A Strength Targeted—Miranda's Intuitive Sense

The community, individuals, and Miranda have benefited from her fabric store. Creative and independent, she tends to view a perceived obstacle as potentially opening pathways with more options. While she may intuit a direction, she then uses her intellect to determine the

direction to be taken. When a male entered this space, a male whose previous occupations were each institutionally authoritarian constructed, he invaded and sublimated this intuitive space, the creative foundation of her business success, and, in addition, her logical decisions resulting from this processing of patterns. Once these focusing intuitive strengths were diminished, her logic in decision making scattered. Her trust in this process had been breached.

Another Strength Targeted: Miranda's Free-Spirited Autonomy

Her personal autonomy involves an ethic of care. Her style of teaching is the facilitative adult education model, a preference she recognized while still in her late-adolescent years. Professional expertise, conversation, and insights are freely shared as the women within the group learn a skill. Two incidents appear to have undermined this autonomy. One was a daily manipulation of her work space using verbal and spacial silencing (hurtful comments, distancing, gestures, gaze, tasks); the other was also spacial—an intruder violated the safety and refuge of her home space. Both her work and home spaces as safe spaces had now been breached. This combination scatters any person's focus. The "fear" and "terror" absorbed within a comparatively short span of time within her home added to, and was reinforced by, the daily invasion and minimilization of her work space. As Miranda said, her partners were "evicting" her. As a female, Miranda was also approaching a socioculturally constructed vulnerable age. She was approaching 50.

Losses

On the main level of Miranda's store, the aesthetic, social and business space, women have typically entered to browse and chat as they selected fabric, or they have participated in classes downstairs. This store seems to have been seen by some women as their restorative creative centre as they explored the designs, textures, and colors of the fabrics, a miniscule part that was theirs alone that males did not enter. "Very much old-ethnic attitudinally, it was children, home, and church activities, women didn't get divorced, and certainly didn't

set up a business!" For, especially in a church-dominated community as this has been, a woman's psyche has had firmly ingrained and imprinted the message that one attends with deference first to the male voice, *his* ego, *his* opinion, and *his* privilege and then perhaps to one's own. Now, as one woman said, "I don't care to go in there any more. A man has no right to be in a woman's store. I like to browse, and he hovers, and I feel uncomfortable."

This physical creative space was the external landmark of Miranda's internal foundation stone. Miranda's inner turmoil and conflict involved this sociocultural space. What perhaps were some violations of her integrity? The most obvious was the reduction of her creative space. The downstairs of her store, used by Miranda for her classes and her own creativity, had been subtly taken over. She was systematically being silenced and rendered less visible within her own work environment. Her key values—her enthusiasm for life, joy, spontaneity, and aesthetic talent—were being de-energized. Her vitality was being displaced. Her physical space within the store became "one little spot;" her male partner began selecting the fabrics and so claimed her aesthetic space; his wife, also a dressmaker, usurped the predominant intellectual, educational and affective teaching space. As well, both partners, involved in the traditional religious beliefs, values and activities, questioned her spiritual-self space (e.g., New-Age reading). *Every aspect of Miranda's identity was being isolated, her independence and psychic wellbeing subtly undermined.*

The Shrinking of Psychic Space

Because this was outside the realm of any former experience, Miranda heeded no warning identifiers, only gradually, and then in retrospect, recognizing the deliberatedness of the actions, seemingly after an intruder violated her total self. The attempted assault in her own home violated her sense of female power, strength, and independence. She confronted a female's reality, her socioculturally constructed physical and psychic vulnerability. Miranda's female energy displaced, her spontaneity diminished. It was as if the real Miranda was retreating to "one little spot" within herself. In short, her psychic self appeared to be attempting a match with the diminished physical and aesthetic space allotted her in her store.

One's body and persona daily mirrors lifeworld reality. On a daily basis she now encountered a couple's traditional religious values, as the couple comprised a newly-retired male accustomed to power and taking control redefining his own identity, and his wife who took a complementary position. To some degree, Miranda had stepped backwards in time into her former environment, a lifestyle she thought she had left behind. From a self-confident woman in touch with her inner Self and her intuitive voice, Miranda now exemplified Erikson's definition of persons suffering identity confusion, persons who "feel they are betraying their core and losing their grip on 'their' time" (1968, p. 204). Miranda explained this loss as "experiencing emotional turmoil." Moreover, Erikson considered "*centrality, wholeness, and initiative* as the attributes" necessary for an individual identity (1964, p. 86). These appear to have been what were concentrated on to lessen Miranda's focusing strengths. She now felt "extremely fearful, and could not see her future." She became more confused as her work-world routine was systematically restructured. By 1997, not only was Miranda defending her psychosocial town identity but also her psychic health and wellbeing. She was becoming a shell of her former self. A certain listlessness was replacing her former vitality. How did this happen?

One interpretative observation. Miranda's male partner's former occupations had been not only authoritarian, but hierarchically exclusively male. This hierarchy controlled the knowledge access, encouraging power networking. Possibly, then, Miranda's independent spirit, energy and high-confidence level was perceived as unfeminine, unbecoming, and usurping *his* public profile. Perhaps Miranda, very much her own person, was to become a pseudo-identity, a reconstructed shadow figure, enabling others' aesthetic and creative development while she assisted at the practical economic level. As Miranda approached her 50th birthday, I wondered, given her present lifeworld experiences, was her birthday to be a celebration of a synthesis of her Self to that point, of forward visioning and a continuing of her life? Or was Miranda to view this celebration as a "wake," retiring her identity as she had lived a good life?

Nevertheless, the personal is political. Miranda has had some sociocultural advantages. Born in 1947, coming of age in 1968, marrying in 1969, Miranda is a product of the era following the contraceptive pill and second feminist wave. This sociohistorical time enabled her socioeconomic and sociocultural identity and wellbeing. A female now had more independence. For the first time in the Western World's known history, a married woman could now become the guardian of her own body. A husband's socially constructed privilege lessened, particularly as delegated by the dominant religions, theologians, and clergy.

As well, when Miranda was 10 years of age, her father had died. During Miranda's adolescence and young adulthood it was her independent and economically talented widowed mother who had managed the family farm. She had supported herself and her children until her remarriage at the time Miranda was separating from her husband and setting up her business. Her mother had then left the district until her second husband's death, returning when Miranda, having maintained an independent, autonomous, generative Self, was in her mid-40s.

Miranda's Challenge: Ego Integrity or Ego Despair?

Identity is never established as an achievement in the form of a personality armor or of anything static or unchangeable (Erikson, 1968, p. 24).

Miranda's strength, self-assurance and self-respect, the outward exemplification of her inner vitality and openness of expression, appear to have been targetted. Possibly for the first time, Miranda now experienced—and confronted—male "Authority." At times, dispirited and despairing, she progressively experienced irresolution. By 1997, her body and conversation looked and sounded functional.

However, Miranda for so many years had had a strong sense of Self, having stepped outside of the conforming circle 20 years prior to this second crisis. Now, once again, she refused to submit. Instead, she became confused, then angry and depressed. She continued her esoteric reading patterns and workshops, her personal reflections and conversations with

women in her friendship circle. She visited friends in another country. She resumed knitting, "rather mindless, but possibly therapeutic." Actually, while designing and completing a project, she was refocusing her Self.

The body as a signal to the self. It seems Miranda's creative energy, her intuitive business acumen, and her future aspirations were to be forfeited during the last half of her life. Instead, she would be seen primarily as an assistant standing behind the counter in her store, measuring cloth and taking payment while her male partner explored his aesthetic side. Miranda's psychic energy was to be minimized while her body was to resonate towards her Self a different image of her identity, of *who* she was. Justifiably, Miranda balked.

Initially, Miranda attempted to protect her inner Self from further outside interference by impressing observers with its ordinariness—a conventional hairstyle, clothing, a weight gain. She even occasionally absented herself from work, presumably to protect her psyche. She intended celebrating her 50th birthday, yet she was becoming increasingly aware that her reality following this celebration could well be a series of devaluing experiences. For women such as Miranda, whose personality and wellbeing is intertwined with positive and productive community-affective experiences, the actions and intents within some segments of society following a woman's 50th birthday come as an astonishing surprise. A number of the women in this present study, and I, share Miranda's experience. Possibly, initially Miranda disbelieved and discounted her self-knowledge, largely ignoring her body's awareness of others' negative intentions towards her social displacement. The assault removed all doubt. She now sought professional help, which the therapist "called post-traumatic stress."

Reinstating her Identity Toward Ego Integrity

Depression is an emotional springboard to leap to where we need to be on a personal basis. (Miranda, in conversation, October, 1998).

In conversation, Miranda stated emphatically that the title *Ms* establishes a woman as a

personality in her own right. A woman using this title, she felt, cannot as readily be stigmatized or itemized, whereas the titles *Miss* or *Mrs.* automatically signifies an absence or presence of a male. For Miranda, a loss of her personal Self was a loss of her identity, and that, she thought, is "a woman's greatest fear."

Sociocultural support roles: the community. While maintaining a business relationship, Miranda had left her social identifiers, her church group, when she found after her marital separation that she caused some discomfort. Through the years following, she extended her inner identity of adolescence and young adulthood by teaching, reading widely, meeting regularly with the local business women, and later involving herself in the Soroptomist Club activities. By attending various workshops, again across a wide range of subject areas, she not only broadened her knowledge base, but enlarged her circle of women friends and her business network. When stressed, she sought alternative medicine and therapeutic touch rather than traditional medical practices. She preferred her own counsel and commonsense comments from supportive friends rather than professional counselling during the anxiety of her separation, divorce, and inception of her business.

A professional assists. Following the assault, however, with legal proceedings, difficulties with partners, and her personal multi-directional trauma, Miranda sought professional advice and support. Horney (1987) observed that "whatever is obstructing [her] growth and development in real life, will also obstruct [her] own and our attempts to help [her] toward growth in therapy" (p. 74).

Between the 1997 interview and our conversation in October 1998, Miranda chose not to renew the couple's contract, resulting in a second court case. As well, during one visit to her female psychiatrist, Miranda evidently had spoken at some length about the power and spirituality of female energy. The professional had remained silent, then had phrased a question in such a manner as if refuting Miranda, or at least as if not understanding what Miranda was saying. Miranda had walked out. As she related to me, "It is as if you have to

take on your psychiatrist and show who's in command!"

One can imagine the frustration, anger, and mind dialogue fueling her determination towards regaining her independence, and discovering exactly what the issue, the problem or challenge was. It seems this incident and perceived affront was the catalyst towards Miranda's regaining her focus, her centre, that that moment once again grounded her.

Afterword

The pride of gaining a strong identity may signify an inner emancipation from a more dominant group identity, such as that of the "compact majority." (Erikson, 1968, p. 22)

Miranda is a successful business woman, an independent thinker with a mind and will of her own. She is also community-minded. Strongly intuitive, one senses she also is attuned to her body's reading of her lifeworld space by the degree of energy and vitality she shares—and one in turn experiences. Significantly, to my mind, male authoritarian figures have largely been absent from Miranda's life. Since young adolescence, *she* has defined and negotiated her own space rather than adopting the psychological space assigned to her socially, economically, and religiously. Not surprisingly, her mentors are strong multi-talented artistic women, who have stretched the limits of convention intellectually. In addition, these women—the English actress then politician, Glenda Jackson; Americans, Shirley MacLaine and Barbra Streisand; and television newscaster and interviewer, Australian Jana Wendt—are all exceptionally-talented artists as well as highly successful business women.

Following the successful outcome of her two court cases, Miranda is again sole owner of her store. She has shown that, while sharing her creative space, she will not have it usurped. No longer as withdrawn or conversationally cautious, one notes her former energy and enthusiasm returning. Her store is now advertised on a State-wide radio station, broadening not only her store's exposure, but the town's as well. Her classes are thriving. Miranda, subjected to behavioral conditioning, once aware, again took charge. Miranda's life history

has shown, and is currently showing, what an American educator believed, namely that

The aesthetic sense functions to integrate the person-in-environment and moves, whenever conditions permit, away from a more static, monotonous wholeness achieved through sameness and toward one with greater differentiation and intensity. (Wilson, in Moustakas, Ed., 1954, p. 217)

MALEN

When I was in Grade 3, I was one of two chosen to present a school play, and from then on drama was what I really wanted to do. I really enjoyed being on the stage. Years later, registering for high school, my friend and I were asked our future plans. Unfortunately, she answered first, and said her first choice was a teacher. I wanted to teach but I felt compelled then not to be a teacher as we had grown up in a competitive situation. For my self-preservation I would not challenge anybody. So I said I'd like to be a nurse. This was the first time my parents were aware of any of my interests; they had never asked. I didn't intend being a nurse; I believed that somehow I would stand on that stage. My real interest, never shared, was theatre.

I never studied in primary school. I was always able to recall enough to get above-average marks. When I entered high school, I didn't know how to study; I couldn't handle the homework; and for the first week or so I had no textbooks, so fell behind. As a consequence, my studies weren't going very well, and high school became a problem. I preferred the social interaction with my fellow classmates, the sports activities rather than the academic focus. So, when my father came home one evening and said he had found a job for me as a shop assistant, it was an easy way out. I didn't have to go to school any more. I left school on my 14th birthday, although I remember the headmaster wanted me to continue. I wanted to return to school at the end of that first year as I didn't like that work, but my father said "No way! You're out of school and you're just not going back!" Eighteen months later there was a business downturn and I was dismissed. It was my mother who reminded me that I'd wanted to be a nurse and took me to a local hospital for an interview. I was accepted but could only start at 17 years of age, so for the following 12 months I worked as a domestic. I then did my first 2 years of training at that country hospital, with the final 2 years of training in the city.

I enjoyed nursing. I applied myself and achieved high marks. I have always found it really easy to memorize; I was interested, and I had good patient rapport. I had a very comprehensive hands-on training. Matron slept on the premises during my night-duty in case of an emergency. From 8 am to 8 pm, I, a teenager, was alone, in charge of the hospital! Study-wise, I got through on ward experience and spending hours off-duty handling the surgical instruments. Once I recognized the shape, I knew what the instrument

was used for; I could identify it, and associate it with the signs and symptoms.

We were married on my 21st birthday, 2 years after becoming engaged. A month later I graduated as a nurse. I was registered, so I wanted to continue my career as an emergency nurse. My husband vetoed my expectation; I could walk the 15 miles if I liked, but I could not use the car. I shed a lot of tears before arranging to have piano lessons. Actually, I spent that first 12 months feeling resentful, so I made music my outlet. I had bought a piano before I married, so when my husband shut the door on nursing, I arranged to have piano lessons and passed the AMEB Grade 7 examination. I spent all the hours he wasn't there playing the piano, overcoming my lack of coordination skills. During these last 39 years, I've overcome a lot.

The next 5 years after that piano exam were immersed in babies. Gardening, tennis, cake decorating, meetings, housework and mothering filled my time. My creative outlet became cake decorating for approximately 8 years. I rarely touched the piano. From my first year of marriage, though, I was our church organist, a position I still hold after 39 years. I accompanied two choirs briefly in my late 20s, one a local community choir. Lack of family support created difficulties and tension, resulting in my curtailing my involvement in one of the choirs. Nevertheless, my music evolved from then on. It was a matter of people needing somebody and I just stepped in—a "jack of all trades and a master of none."

When the children started school in the 1970s, I became president of the Primary School Welfare Club. Having nearly drowned as a child, I thought each school-age child should have swimming lessons. I learned to swim, achieved my qualifying certificate, then began teaching beginners. I wasn't really comfortable teaching swimming so when there were sufficient teachers, I quit. Then, noticing that the end-of-year school breakup socials were simply a few games, I suggested a breakup concert and became the school accompanist and drama assistant. I added a few piano students and Sunday school teaching to my portfolio at this time and held office in our church women's organization at the local level. My mother-in-law also moved into her granny flat, and the children ran to her whenever they didn't want to do their chores.

It was in 1979 that I really became involved with musical education, an involvement that has continued. There was a teacher shortage as well as a shortage of expertise at that time. No certificate of qualification was necessary. I received payment occasionally, but I volunteered many hours. I began by accompanying the primary school music classes, then accepted a local area school request to become their school choir accompanist. I now accompany those choirs at the annual Public School Festival. I do not sing very well. Finding the correct interval is difficult at times, but during these last 20 years with all my training and experience I have largely overcome that obstacle. I have gained the confidence through exposure to different methods of learning, such as the Suzuki and Kodaly.

I guess, though, my whole life was colored when a special friend was killed. It's ridiculous

to say that at 16 years of age I saw a life ahead of me that was quite different, especially as we only went out together for 6 months. But it was something that colored the rest of my life. I met him when my peers were isolating me, which wasn't a new experience. I had experienced coventry in primary school from time to time because I dared to express an unpopular opinion.

Over the years I have felt I married because of peer pressure, and that, as at the high school interview, I wasn't allowed to go against what was said or expected. Then, having gone along with the expectancies, I didn't feel I could retrace my steps. It wasn't until years later when our children were looking for work and my husband said that opportunity would arise that I said, "No, it won't, you've got to make it happen. You've got to do things." I hadn't realized this when I was their age. Where it came from I don't know. I have no conscious recollection of the change. Maybe it was the years of stewing over what was actually going on. I was resentful, but at the same time, I was educated to believe things would happen. I couldn't make things happen or work towards something. I guess it was difficult for my husband when we were first married because I was pretty withdrawn at times. I honestly walked down the aisle believing this marriage wasn't going to last. It definitely wasn't what I wanted to do! I'd felt obliged. It's criminal in a way. It goes against all the things I profess to believe in, but I really did believe that that marriage was going to just fizzle. I had to make the best of the situation. There were the complexities of family expectations, the issues of lack of trust and of mutual understanding. I was very particular in the house. It has always been difficult. I just had to work through all these things. And in working them through, I guess I gained a broader perspective.

It wasn't easy. During my late 30s and early 40s I struggled to grow. I received encouragement from our minister until he died as the result of an accident. The next minister felt threatened and created difficulties. At that same time, a very musical family arrived and said my standards as a musician were inadequate. My mother was suffering depression, so, on the doctor's advice, I was instrumental in having her hospitalized. Not only did the family object to my meddling, but when I visited my mother in the hospital she refused to speak to me. It seemed that I was being criticized on all fronts.

22
Little by little my body gave me obstacles. My doctor prescribed various anti-depressant drugs. I didn't respond to this medication and solved my problems by resigning as Sunday school teacher, giving up cake decorating, piano students, teaching swimming, and neglecting the garden and house cleaning. Instead, when my husband's secretary resigned to marry, I took her place, using the saved wages to pay for our children's secondary education. And I began pipe-organ lessons which I continued for the next 5 years. Then I decided on a new direction.

I actually chose the course at TAFE for a number of reasons. Because of my mother's treatment for depression, I refused to take anti-depressant medication; the tablets remained on the shelf. I was still listening to other peoples' tapes of who I should be, what I should

do. I was beginning to feel like the meat in the sandwich. The children had moved away from home as they were in their late teens, and I heard the gossip about my inadequacy as a mother. My mother-in-law had had a stroke and was dependent on me. She also had a very strong personality; she assumed the role of an organizer. She liked to supervise all of my activities, including how I planted my garden. I felt she was overly critical of everything I did, although all was pleasant on the surface. It finally got to the point where I needed to find some interest that would exclude her interference, that also freed me from supervising her daily needs, and yet would not be too hurtful. I had to learn to feel she wasn't my responsibility entirely, that there were other family members. I had to learn not to punish myself because things hadn't happened, not to wear what wasn't mine to wear by taking on the guilt. This study took up my time to the extent that I just wasn't always available.

I had been taking the odd course with the Education Department until they closed me out because of my lack of high school certification. During my mid-40s, I was astute enough to realize that hourly-paid instructors would be needing certified qualifications, but when I investigated the possibilities of teacher training within the classroom setting, I was told that was not available. I could take correspondence. I was devastated, but this time I wouldn't accept defeat. A primary school teacher who had just completed her AMuSA was encouraging me to qualify, and suggested I apply at TAFE college, as they were setting up a new Associate Diploma in Music Teaching programme. I telephoned, and learned they were auditioning 2 weeks later. I requested a counselling session to discuss my capabilities, but they didn't have the time; instead, I was to prepare two pieces for that audition, which I did. I listened to recordings to determine an interpretation of each piece after making two selections from music I hadn't played for 20-30 years. I had won a competition at 16 years of age for the one selection, the other I had played at my Grade 7 examination.

I auditioned successfully and TAFE college accepted me. I was now in my late 40s. I didn't realize what I was letting myself in for because I had no real study background. I learned how to study at TAFE through necessity. While I could listen to what the lecturer was saying, I couldn't take notes. I couldn't pick out key words and phrases. Rather than reading about someone else's experience, I memorize by association—I learn by touch, by doing, by visualization. During my first year at TAFE, once I realized I had very few skills to complete the course successfully, I asked my piano teacher how I came to be accepted. They needed the numbers, she said. From her reply I knew I was on the bottom of the rung of the ladder! I wanted to achieve, yet felt very threatened. But I was not going to give in. I was going to put up a good fight.

That first year, I learnt I was one of the best performing artists in piano. The assessors wanted me given a subject credit, but my instructor disagreed. My course-work was a different matter! Faced with all the assignments, I realized I didn't know where to start, let alone do them! Once again, I let myself get into a real corner before I sought, could even vocalize, that I needed more help than I was receiving. At TAFE, I learned that a minority of people need to be shown. Once shown, I could modify it to suit me, but I needed that first

before I could even begin. It was the same with my piano pieces. Once shown how to analyze one piece, I could be left alone. I was not shown. I only realized what my problem was at the end of the programme, as I told the examiners. As a piano teacher, I now give my students this information early. But when I first began the courses, I didn't know how to cope.

I was hearing only negative comments and pressure from my immediate- and extended-family members. Comments such as, "Malen, why do you have to go back to school, it's ridiculous! It's quite unnecessary." My children were the only ones encouraging me. I was in a very vulnerable situation and my body reacted accordingly—heart, back, reproductive system. I finally went to the doctor in desperation, exhausted. Then I changed doctors when my back was injured as a result of shifting a piano at a concert. This doctor checked out my heart and reproductive system as well as my back. Subsequently, a gynaecologist advised a hysterectomy. Well, that was Malen's out, wasn't it. She could have surgery. She was inactive. And that's what I did. So I failed all but one of the 6 subjects I attempted that year. I didn't know then that I could apply for extenuating circumstances. I just accepted a fail!

I believe the TAFE instructors didn't expect I was going to hang in there. My course adviser had me take 6 courses in my first year. But having failed, I put myself behind the eight-ball. I realized there was a lot of learning I had to do before I could establish that association process, and I knew it would be very difficult. I also have a phobia about putting pen to paper, about committing myself to writing. I didn't know how or where to begin writing my papers. So I arranged for a 2-hour essay-writing-technique session at another TAFE college. That was all I needed. The instructor asked what my topic was, what I intended to say, then had me write. When I had finished, she read it, said I had no problem, and gave me a handout. Now I had the study tools, the technique, and in retrospect, more of the "nets" within my brain working again. I knew now how to locate my library books and note the quotations I perhaps would use. So, you see, I say I'm slow and I'm dumb. But I couldn't have been too dumb to be able to have one 2-hour session and pull all that lack of knowledge together. Interestingly, since I graduated, essay writing has become a compulsory subject within that program.

My studies went well during the next couple of years. Then my sister went through a divorce and her daughter's death. I put everything aside, but this time I wrote a letter to the Board of Studies claiming extenuating circumstances (my children's marriages were not). By now I was 50, in my Fourth Year, and on overload supporting my sister.

When I went to TAFE, I really stood up for what I wanted to do, instead of what I was expected to do. I realise now I was finding myself. I was determined to persevere. It was a new friend who finally helped me turn around. When I told her I had always wanted to teach, she encouraged me to continue my education and helped me overcome my guilt. I realize now I was gradually taking responsibility for my life and having others take responsibility for theirs. Prior to meeting her, I had tried a hypnotherapist on the recommendation of a teacher but I'm too strong-willed to really be a good subject and too

analytical to accept what is happening. While hypnotherapy made me aware of the barriers I was facing, it wasn't giving me the tools to deal with them. I next tried reflexology, which was helpful. This reflexologist gave me the name of an Educational Kinesiology therapist as she recognized I lacked self-confidence. This time the process was successful. This therapist unblocked my fears using a visualization technique and touch. She showed me how to be satisfied with my convictions rather than subservient to others' opinions. I was now 51 years old. This Edu-K therapist taught me how to view things from a different perspective and not to carry the things people like to load on me. Both the therapist and the reflexologist helped me through the 3 years remaining of my program, encouraging and supporting me. It was a long haul. In retrospect I would be able to do it again but I would do it differently. My 6-year course had become an 8-year course, but after the graduation ceremony, my course organizer said, "Congratulations, you really deserved to achieve." My husband and my long-time piano teacher were present, my husband to video it.

Yes, there were community and close-family obstacles. That was part of the reason I extended my interests. By doing this study, my time became limited. It isolated me—or you could say I isolated myself. I had to find a way whereby I could not feel badly about hurting somebody else. I had to learn to not punish myself when I wasn't responsible, to refuse to wear what wasn't mine. My friend who suggested Edu-K was the instigator.

My teaching has grown since graduating. I currently have 40 students. As well, shortly after completing my studies, I accepted a position as a women's choir director. To assist me with the voice sections, and tone, I began voice lessons 3 years ago to understand how the voice works. Some of my activities involve concerts. I have a really tight schedule, but I'm enjoying it. I'll burn out rather than rust out. I know that. I need a purpose. I haven't got a plan of action. I believe my activities will be determined by what is going on around me. My husband has become a very important and a valued part of my life. He is quite happy to see me come and go, to continue what I am doing for as long as I am able. I have friends I keep in contact with, but not necessarily on a regular basis. I have women, and one or two male figures from childhood, whom I consider my mentors and role models. All the women are involved in music, teaching, performing, and composing. I'm learning all the time. I have been greatly influenced by my first piano teacher who once said, "Don't say no, you'll never be asked again." My voice teacher who is in her 80s is still very active. My Grade 7 piano teacher taught me that what I do is good enough; all I have to do is practise it on every level.

Hypnosis, Alexander Technique, Educational Kinesiology, and mature-age education has enabled me to achieve a perspective that allows me to take responsibility for my actions and decisions and feel able to dare to be different without feeling guilty. I remove myself from manipulative people because I resent manipulation; I value my independence. My general health is stable with assistance from alternative medication and massage. I still prefer to do the artsy things rather than chores. I am still rebellious. My strong sense of justice seems to come through in the discussions you have recorded. I would rather prevent a mess than

be responsible for cleaning it up. I was a rather bitter, resentful, and angry person for many years. I felt that everything I was doing was predetermined by someone else. I was not aware I could make choices for myself.

The source of my strength is God. I was searching for that "Peace that passeth all understanding." For me, that Peace is achieved through trusting in God's orchestration of events, knowing that the end result will be for my benefit. This knowledge facilitates a calmness and a serenity to assess a situation, then logically work step-by-step putting things in order. I achieved this conviction through Edu-K. I grew up under the Law, as there was no Gospel in my understanding. I was taught the Law and I punished myself because I was inadequate. A better balance of Law and Gospel has been established for me at this time.

I have been an attractive woman who realizes that "looks are only skin deep, that real beauty comes from inside." I've looked at leaders from that point of view—physical beauty is enhanced by inner beauty that comes out. I appreciate personality. As I near 60 years of age, I'm still a presence, but I'm aware that people are less drawn to one sexually and I'm seeing the now 30-year-olds are being treated as once I was.

I have endeavoured to develop my potential and achieve my ambitions without being totally selfish. As you can see, a hobby became a way of life because my mother facilitated my interest in music. She insisted I practice and gave me all the encouragement during my childhood and adolescence. In my young adulthood, I had enough background to complete Grade 7 and later, my Associate Diploma. It was an unconscious movement into the school(s) when my children started school, but I was convinced that those children needed that opportunity. These stepping stones evolved. Not conscious of setting that goal, I am there! I am teaching.

If one can see the self only as mirrored in the eyes of others, the urgency is great to live up to others' expectations in the hope of preventing others from forming a dim view. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 48)

My business is not to remake myself, but make the absolute best of what God made. (Robert Browning)

Overview

I last saw Malen in 1998. Nearing 60 years of age, she has a tall and commanding presence, her naturally dark hair now showing some grey, a sophisticated solid streak of white framing the upper portion of her face. Her energy and enthusiasm for life is contagious. Her smile

is wide, her manner unaffectedly friendly and open, her conversation direct, opinions, concerns and values clearly stated. I have known Malen since childhood, meeting occasionally while attending different schools, forming different friendships, geographically distanced yet remaining connected-at intervals despite the miles.

She continues to use her authentic voice while mentally standing back, so to speak, to check if her "buttons are being pushed." During her interview, Malen stated at one point, "I may be naive, but at the same time I will remain true to myself. I'll simply be a little more alert without second-guessing everyone."

It was during her first year of marriage that Malen determined her "real self," that "central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth" (Horney, 1956, p. 220). Malen's is an aesthetic Self. As one shall see, living within a 20-mile radius of her childhood home and community has enabled Malen to develop her Essence of Self surrounded, for the most part, by the goodwill of her extended family of origin and the local community. From the time she entered the nursing profession, and especially since resuming her music interests during her first year of marriage, Malen has progressively enlarged her sociocultural context altruistically, turning life's negative experiences to positive growth for self and community, enlisting and accepting the support of women mentors of varying age levels along her pathway. Consequently, Malen's lived experiences within this relatively close-knit Australian country setting differs from an American artist-scholar's research analysis of an old(er) woman. "Age," Freuh writes, "may command respect, but old(er) women do not assume the social or archetypal authority that aging men do" (1994, p. 266). In Malen's community, while a man at times may act as if he has the authority, a woman may assert a corresponding authority within her circles when men and women interact, as, I feel, one shall see.

From Malen's story, one understands hers has not been an easy journey. Yet Malen appears to have honed each significant component of life (self in institutional and personal

relationships, intellectual and artistic pursuits, body and spiritual consciousness), while retaining the respect and inclusion of a relatively closed, primarily traditional community. "I've got lots of areas to grow in," commented Malen. And she sees herself doing so. *What* have been some of Malen's challenges? *Why* did she choose the pathway she has? And *how* has Malen walked her chosen path?

Challenges, Choices, and Courage

In the early 1960s, Malen married and came of age when her new husband vetoed a nursing/marriage dual career. Malen began breaking her earlier patterns of taking "the easy way out," the accommodation and compliance that had been her resigned reaction to adult vetoes and to peer pressures as an adolescent. Then, she had been a young adolescent. Now, she was a recent graduate of a nursing program, had shown her accomplishment and effectiveness in this profession, and was independent of her parents as a newly married woman.

During these early months of marriage, Malen undertook a reassessment of *her* needs. She would *not* resignedly accept the traditional role of wife. She would *not* stagnate within others' confines, what others thought best for her, what she *should* do. Instead, she quietly assessed her priorities, weighed her options, and asserted her independence towards what has become ongoing community interaction and involvement—unless, of course, temporarily withdrawing to assess a dilemma, find a solution, and begin. Her commitment to her own development while honoring relationships—parental, nuclear and extended family, church and local community—from that time on translated into focusing on her overcoming obstacles. She first confronted her internalized intellectual and aesthetic inadequacies while involving herself multi-dimensionally in community leadership—her children's local school, her church community, and a local choir. What was one courage motivator? As Malen said, it was recalling the voice of her first music teacher: "Don't say no, you'll never be asked again."

Whose Identity is it?

Women's challenge is to go beyond the status quo, to create structures and norms that do not merely adapt to existing conditions. By acting in accordance with their own ideals, women transcend patriarchal values and develop cooperation and compassion. They are not fulfilled by modifying or destroying what exists around them. (Hall, 1990, p. 4)

A creative person, Malen's journey towards her Self was possibly at first primarily intuitive. Three earlier significant experiences appear to have influenced Malen's ongoing developmental decisions. The first occurred when selected to perform in a school play. As an 8-year old, surely Malen experienced *joy* in the applause, admiration, and respect—and possibly the downside, envy from some classmates. She belonged. In mid-adolescence, the death of a young man ended a potentially significant relationship which “colored the rest of [her] life.” His death seems to have signified a *temporary* loss of hope that then became a continuing personal engagement between the socioreligious cultural expectancies and parameters and her innate sense of potential, worth, dignity, and talents. Finally, while her performance during her high school years initially lessened her intellectual confidence, winning a local piano competition when 16 years of age encouraged and reassured her that she had an identity, that she was relatively accomplished in an artistic medium. Ultimately, these were catalysts, momentous lifeworld events that Malen recalled at future significant decision-making times.

In her late 40s, Malen *consciously*, and with deliberation, forged her own path towards her Essence of Self, largely overcoming others' expectations. Initially, family crises and events continued to have priority. Gradually, though, as her TAFE studies, introduction and involvement in Educational Kinesiology (Edu-K) continued, Malen included herself in the concerned care given others, and, by so doing, her authentic Self-identity (her Essence of Self), has come into focus—to herself and observers. *How* did she arrive at this point?

Malen's experiences with anomie.

The negative of this kind of [life cycle] virtue cannot be vice; rather, it is a

weakness, and its symptoms are disorder, dysfunction, disintegration, anomie. But "weakness" fails to account for the complexity of the disturbance and to account for the particular rage which accumulates whenever man is hindered in the activation and perfection of the virtues outlined here. Only when active tension is restored do things fall into place, strongly and simply. (Erikson, 1964, p. 139)

These virtues are hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care and wisdom. To my mind, Malen's concentration in her mid- to late-40s was to redetermine her competence, her future direction, towards an identity recognized as uniquely hers. She wanted her musical abilities, her *personal* self-identity recognized and shared generatively with her community.

Reviewing Malen's journey, one observes a selfhood that had been scattered, in the main, during her adolescence. Between the ages of 12 and 16, Malen endured damaging experiences to her young- and mid-adolescent emerging self and identity—she had experienced academic embarrassment, intellectually and affectively demeaning labour, and manipulative peer pressure. Relationship-wise, the death of a young man devastated her. Possibly, at the time, Malen saw him as like-mindedly appreciating and endorsing her values. It seems he understood her need to enlarge her social spaces and contribution beyond her then known world. In the religious-spiritual domain, her church defined the behavioral boundaries for its youth, emphasizing the Law, as Malen said. Within her environment, Malen experienced the indoctrinated, external authority of her minister, teachers, and parents. She was to obey. This *imposed* knowledge encouraged compliance, dependency and malleability, thus discouraging her unique Self development—her creative individuality, spontaneity, initiative and intensity of feeling (c.f. Johnson, 1993). Instead, Malen's personality was to be shaped (c.f. Johnson, 1993). Strong-willed and independent, Malen successfully resisted, gradually transcending these patriarchal values, while remaining, and effectively participating, *within* that community.

To do so, *her developmental issues have centred on her consistent determination to maintain her authentic Self, her aesthetic talents, actualized by contributing towards family, church, school, and general community.* This has involved three components of her lifeworld: her

voice, using both language and music as tools (Belenky et al., 1986; Vygotsky, 1934/1986); motivating this struggle for awareness, then recognition of this voice, has been a corresponding identification of her values (Erikson, 1964, 1968; Freire, 1970; Havighurst, 1956; Maslow, 1954, 1956), and, towards will, competence, and the issue of caring, a recognition of her musical competence, her *personal* identity, by herself and others (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Johnson, 1993; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995).

The significance of voice. As identified in the Literature Review, Belenky et al., (1986), interviewed 135 women of diversified class and educational background, and identified five developmental voice levels that reveal and impact on one's use of knowledge, both experiential and formal. At one end of the continuum is a silenced woman. At the other is a woman who connects formal knowledge with some component of her lifeworld, revitalising a perspective within a knowledge component. From the perspective of a female's development, Malen's experiences on this continuum are illustrative.

At times, Malen's childhood and young adolescent Self were "silenced." Giving a correct answer and recognizing she was perceived as out of place, Malen recalled one earlier intellectual and affective reaction—"I shouldn't be upfront like that." On occasion, when she felt an injustice being meted out and voiced her concern, she experienced coventry. In early adolescence, although others' motivations possibly may have been well-intended, Malen's future choices and decisions were made on her behalf; a retracing of steps, such as resuming high school, was denied. Malen learned caution. Discussion being pointless, Malen was silenced at times, observing the nuances of verbal and body language. She learned, during her early adolescence as the "receiver of knowledge," that The Experts answered for her. However, once a mother, she developed a more "subjective" and confident voice through involvement independently and more widely in her community (as for example, drawing on childhood experiences when suggesting and implementing some activity, such as the swimming lessons and the end-of-year concerts). Her experience with the use of the procedural component of knowledge was brief and towards genuine knowledge acquisition.

It was the "how" to get to where she intuited she wanted to be. In adopting "procedural knowledge" as a tool towards overcoming her confusion rather than taking advantage of a grade or professional requirements during her early years at TAFE College, Malen became aware of a "connected knowing" between and among her group members and her own personal experiences with reflexology and Edu-K.

Finally, by incorporating these therapeutic experiences into her formal TAFE knowledge, she developed her unique style of piano teaching. She constructed knowledge, not only by effectively using a unique piano-teaching method, but by writing her major project paper on its successful application. In short, during her TAFE studies, while in her early 50s, Malen slowly took command of *which* voice component *she* would use. Malen negotiated each critical passage. As these co-authors uncovered, "to learn to speak in a unique and authentic voice, women must "jump outside" the frames and systems authorities provide and create their own frame (Belenky et al., p. 134).

A sixth developmental voice: one's body. Malen experienced being "seen and not heard" as a child and adolescent. As one consequence, I believe, Malen became over-controlled by others' neediness and their conformist-control principles. During her 40s, Malen's body signalled her personality was being stifled, her spirit being slowly crushed. Traditional diagnosis and medication were unsuccessful. It was not until Malen correlated body discomfort and pain with others' negative behaviour towards her, or her over-willingness to avoid the "selfish" label, assisting others at the expense of herself too frequently, that she stepped out to retrieve her Self. As one's body as well as language "remains one way in which my self can express itself" (May, 1972, p. 70), Malen's body spoke and showed the pathway. Understandably, confronting past mind-tapes and others' expectancies initially proved difficult.

"Can anyone ever get rid of the tapes?" Perhaps Malen's lifeworld history as glimpsed shows a miniscule segment of the long-term destructive force of socioculturally defined

gender roles. Apart from her brief nursing experience, when she experienced a professional's trust in her, Malen was to sublimate her independence, identity, and will to her parents first, to be replaced by a husband upon marriage. It seems that it was anticipated that her husband set the values that, childlike, she was to obey. Fortunately, though, this culture also encouraged a mother's involvement in her children's activities. It was initially through such involvement that Malen determined her future direction, developing the discipline and confidence later to challenge and risk more defiantly. Her body's wellbeing ultimately became her messenger.

What influenced her thinking and behavioral patterns, and challenged her at intervals, was the sociocultural protectiveness, insularity, and expectancies manifested by the language and action codes of her close-knit sociohistorical religious community. Malen had experienced knowledge-acquiring as competitively confrontational, as a win/lose situation, rather than as a normal developmental process. Initially, it was Malen's music that became her language tool to identify, and clarify, her thoughts and feelings, to engage both head and heart, and eventually, her body. In the process of using and developing this tool, this language metaphor of mind and affect has enlarged her lifeworld.

Stepping Stones: From Surviving to Authenticity

In the healthy person, autonomy, spontaneity, and self-direction are the guiding forces in the development of unique identity and creative life (Moustakas, 1967, p. 130).

How did Malen incorporate an ethic of self-care into her ethic of caring? First, Malen is determined and not easily molded. She learned to keep silent about some observations and above all *what* her long-range plans were. She applied this principle shortly after her marriage, when her husband vetoed her continuing her nursing profession. And later, once she recognised undermining, rather than acquiescing to others' intentions for her life and institutional role (home, church, community), Malen quietly determined her own, seeking self-awareness.

Given their socioreligious culture, it is conceivable that Malen's husband was not intentionally controlling her, but rather adapting unquestioningly and unconsciously to his required role. However, by vetoing the use of the car, he grounded her. For the moment, Malen could not exercise her own needs and lifestyle, nor determine her own actions, and she seemed powerless to do anything about it. Her new husband appeared to be blocking her growth needs much as her father had done by vetoing her return to high school all those years before.

At that early point, at 21 years of age, Malen set her future pattern. After initially grieving this loss, Malen chose another direction. Creatively, Malen used her initiative in searching for an alternate route, then tenacity in application. She now used her piano playing to resolve this next threat to her independent identity. In her husband's absence, she concentrated on her music, resuming lessons, and challenging an exam. While publicly a "wife," in her inner sense of Self, Malen would remain somewhat aloof, independent and separate, maintaining her own identity, whatever that became.

In her late 30s to mid-40s, Malen became aware of rumours that challenged her identity and personal integrity once again. Within this relatively close-knit church community, she became the subject of gossip as she "struggled to grow." Her adolescent children having left home, she was erroneously labelled a "bad mother." A new minister "felt threatened," while new church members felt her "inadequate as the church organist." Worse, her mother-in-law was becoming overly critical, and her family of origin rejecting her for having made a professional decision in good faith. *Confronted with diminishing validation which eventuates in stagnation, first in a diminishment of personality and self-esteem, then in a lessening of social involvement, Malen acted.* She detached to reflect in the neutral territory of her home. Overwhelmed, Malen again insulated herself, dropping for a time all volunteer activities except her position as church organist. As she had done when first married, she concentrated on her music, this time pipe-organ lessons. While successfully challenging her supposed lack of musicality as an organist, Malen focused her next venture. She would teach

music professionally. Once again, her music, together with essential daily routine tasks, became her activities while reflecting on the significance of her discomfort and disquiet, on her sense of devaluation and experience with this destructive criticism. Malen "was still listening to other peoples' tapes of who and what [she] should be, and was beginning to feel like the meat in a sandwich." But she refused to conform. Instead, she challenged her intellectual and aesthetic capabilities. To my mind, she exemplified Erikson's comment, that, "the pride of gaining a strong identity may signify an inner emancipation from a more dominant group identity, such as that of the 'compact majority'" (1968, p. 22).

Her first year at TAFE proved overwhelming. Not only did she challenge the intellectual odds of an inadequate academic background, but her change in direction threatened her extended family and the status quo—what would happen to *their* priorities? Her children were the only ones admiring her decision and courage. Overly negatively stressed, her physical health deteriorated and her grades suffered. Hospitalization and a hysterectomy proved ineffective. Determined to regain her feeling of wellbeing rather than to remain resentful and dulled, she stepped onto the non-traditional pathway towards wholistic health. Malen saw traditional anti-depressants and traditional advice as a bandaid. She wanted to heal, and thrive. "Hypnotherapy made [her] aware of the barriers; reflexology was helpful, but it was the visualization technique and touch of Educational Kinesiology that unblocked her fears." At 51 years of age, she began to do "what she wanted," not "what was expected."

With customary initiative, courage, and resiliency, Malen challenged her learning obstacles. Excited and stimulated by new ideas, too many facts and a broadening perspective in her association with knowledge and with her fellow class members, Malen lost her focus in information overload. Preferring a cooperative program, not unlike her nursing training, where theory reinforced the field experience, she was endeavoring, with inadequate note-taking, research, and writing skills, to function effectively in the sterile environment of a lecture room. So, determined to overcome her internalized inadequacies, she arranged for a tutorial on researching and writing a paper. This action resulted in enhanced self-

confidence. "You see," Malen said, "I say I'm slow and I'm dumb. But I couldn't have been *too* dumb to be able to have *one* 2-hour session to pull all that lack of knowledge together." Inadvertently, she also enlightened the Diploma program instructors. A research and writing course is now mandatory. Rather than "procrastination," then, her initial inertia appears to have been more a temporarily inadequate grasp of the problem. As Malen, it seems, focuses first on the whole before the part, this "procrastination" is akin to the incubation process of creative problem solving. Her issue was possibly as Belenky and coauthors discovered, that "rather than extricating the self in the acquisition of knowledge, these women used themselves in rising to a new way of thinking" (1986, pp. 134-135).

Likewise, Malen struggled in her coursework to incorporate her ideas and ideologies together with her experiences into an acceptable framework of written text. Her major project became an optional component of her piano-teaching technique, which highlighted overcoming learning blocks and encouraging musicality in individual students. In effect, Malen wrote her project as she had wished to be taught, with the individual's personality as the focus of the lesson. Using several students, and the use of a pre-test, post-test situation to demonstrate its effectiveness, Malen's method combines technique, the student's learning style, and her own self-awareness. Malen connected her knowing. *One* earlier "2-1/2 hour essay-writing-technique session and a handout" plus the *essential freedom* to construct her own paper creatively, was all she required.

As Malen widened her support circles and people noticed the changes, some felt threatened while others were confused. Nevertheless, she continued her TAFE studies and exploration of the non-traditional therapeutic methods. Once aware, she analyzed, "Manipulative people thrive on seeing others' discomfort;" then, when possible, she removed herself. Given Malen's primary socialization experiences, her long-term family and community involvements within the same social setting, it *must* have been difficult at times. In developing her awareness of self-care, her strength of character, intrinsic motivation, and determined perseverance in the rightness of her project shines through. In process, Malen

was required not only to identify her sociocultural and socioreligious patterning, but also to select *her* values. This meant possibly threatening others with her shift in some attitudes and outlook.

The Issue is Values

[Constructivist women] reveal in the way they speak and live their lives their moral conviction that ideas and values, like children, must be nurtured, cared for, and placed in environments that help them to grow. (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 152)

Since her late 40s, Malen's strong-mindedness, determination, tenacity, and creativity in discovering her Essence of Self, what she terms "the me that God wants to use" has been Malen's conscious goal. Identifying her values involved questioning her internalised religious beliefs. Rather than adapting her personality towards others' perceptions of who she should be, Malen appears to have used others' reactions to monitor her energy level. This intuitive-strength indicator maintains her resiliency against others' behavioural inhibitors or modifiers that caused frustration and an inner rebelliousness prior to Edu-K classes. Since her introduction to Edu-K, Malen monitors her body's energy level. By doing so, she has achieved a degree of self-care within relationships, acceptance of her individuality, and some immunity to others' pressures on the integrity of her choices.

Malen referred to her shift from outer/other control toward a personal internal assessment of events and decision-making using the Christian language labels of Law and Gospel. As an adolescent and young woman of the 1950s and early 1960s, obeying her parents and then her husband was the unwritten expectation reinforced by her church and the surrounding Australian culture. In her late 40s, I believe Malen challenged that gendered role, one cause of her psychic suffocation (her resentment, depression, ill-health, and general *ennui*). Possibly unaware at first, Malen was determining her social, spiritual and ethical maturity. Her search for "peacefulness" motivated Malen's move away from religious compliance towards a more aware and selective spirituality. It required Malen's shifting her focus away from the dogma of religious indoctrination and role-identity masks towards a more reflective

personal involvement and responsible choice. By taking charge of her life more assertively and knowledgeably, and choosing to develop her aesthetic talent, her music, Malen explored her strengths, resiliencies, personal talents, and values. *By neutralizing the intrusive or problematic segments in her life, by declaring some areas non-negotiable, Malen's ego integrity involved anomie surrounding her middle adulthood issues of personal identity.* Cooperation, consensus, and authenticity, each of which requires an open communicative style, became conscious values. Likewise, Malen's own childhood and adolescent disappointments serve as an impetus towards enabling and encouraging opportunities and talents for children, adolescents, and adults.

New Beginnings: a Personally Chosen Identity

Identity empowerment is increased autonomy and increased awareness of choices leading ultimately to revised commitments with broad social consequences. (Hall, 1990, p. 180)

Malen knew what she *didn't* want, namely a sedentary life, especially once her children had left home. She recognized that her requirements were more community and self-creative, more people-focused and -oriented. While fulfilling her needs during her mid-40s and early-50s, Malen broadened her knowledge base and widened her social contacts. She did not achieve in isolation. Her mother's persistence provided the foundation for both her aesthetic and academic outcome. During the process of creating her future, several significant women aided and encouraged her.

Malen credits elderly women in their 80s among her mentors, women still actively involved in educational, culturally aesthetic community pursuits. What qualities about each did she highlight that indicate her developmental process, those qualities she was/is simultaneously identifying and internalizing? Using Malen's descriptors, these women are not only gifted and intelligent pianists, teachers and academics, but also energetic and courageous in their ability to overcome obstacles, including (in one instance), a major physical disability. Nothing appears to defeat them. Each has been a quiet encourager of Malen's journey.

Personalities who know their own minds, each, in her own way, reassured Malen that as a person she was okay. Two therapists supported her through—her reflexologist, and her Edu-K therapist. Their expectations of her success was what she needed at that time to succeed, and so she met their expectations. Equally important, Malen now recognizes her still-present intellectual barriers—self-protective boundaries that she finds difficult to overcome. Yet she perseveres, invariably successful.

Malen risked ostracization by seeking therapeutic help from other than male Experts. She had somehow to turn the internalized myth of rationalizing and justifying her socialized passivity and compliance towards responsible choice. Because Malen's body was targetted as her problem, she used this body to guide her return to her Essence of Self. *As she continues her journey, she has moved beyond an intellectual focus and is incorporating her imagination and metaphor.* Reactivating her musical talent as her personal growth component, her Essence of Self is returning, and with it her use of metaphor and imagination.

As has been seen, Malen's method was a combination of intellect (formal studies, although she struggled with them) and affect (her music). It was finally two women outside of her, then, trusted community, whose empathy and unconditional positive regard provided the necessary encouragement and support for Malen's fears, failures, and successes as she moved towards the retrieval of *her* Essence of Self (authentic identity).

Presently, Malen's life is inter-generationally diverse and personally challenging. Family commitments continue to grow as she involves herself even more with her children, grandchildren, a husband shortly to enter retirement, her siblings and their stresses, and elderly parents requiring more extended care as they live out the remaining years of their respective lives with a dignity Malen helps maintain. Within her church, the schools, and wider community, Malen continues with her music commitments. Asked to accompany a young, musically insecure violin student, while practising with a parent present, Malen

coached this student additionally in rhythmic and general knowledge. This student subsequently successfully challenged her own violin examination.

Recently, the choir Malen has accompanied for 17 years engaged the services of an assistant accompanist. Malen agitated. Was she being perceived as inadequate in some area? Taking into account the assistant accompanist's wish to use her own talent, sensitive to the needs of the choir, and her own needs, Malen's suggested solution was both creative and original. Why not try duo-accompanying for part of the concert? The musical director implemented this innovative idea. However, the situation was not completely resolved. Rather than becoming involved in the politics, Malen has requested resolution, challenging the choir to either commit to an accompanist or find a permanent replacement. By asserting herself, Malen has refused the responsibility for resolving a potentially difficult situation.

Malen wanted to become an actress. The memory of that first brief stage appearance appears to have carried her forward—drama and music assistance in the primary schools, accompanying in the high schools, and a performance audition to enter TAFE. While her husband appears to prefer a more solitary life as he nears retirement, Malen continues to move beyond her nuclear-family focus and larger family to incorporate a wider circle of community fellowship through her studio, schools, choir, and local church community. From a recent conversation, Malen may be entering a further phase, as recently she has entered yet another period of reflective disquiet. This time, however, she is continuing with her activities. To my mind, Moustakas has verbally drawn Malen's portrait:

Acceptance of the experience of being different enables one to reach a heightened state of awareness of the important facets of one's world, the nature of feelings, the significance of people, how the constituents of one's world affects one's perceptions. Being different is a way of discovering one's self and others, a way of knowing what distinguishes wheat from chaff, what nourishes and satisfies, what uplifts and supports. (Moustakas, 1995, p. 17)

IRIS

I was born in Canada, and spent my childhood and early adolescence in a fundamentalist Christian rural community, which is why for a brief time during my adolescence I considered becoming a missionary. For 3 years I studied at a Bible Institute and it was during this time that someone heard me singing and suggested I have voice training. They had a wonderful music program and I became their mezzo-soprano soloist for all the big functions, including oratorios. My innermost dream was that I would be able to sing really well. My first wish was to become a teacher. Underlying these, though, I really wanted a loving husband and children and vibrancy in my life.

I did not become either a missionary or a teacher. Instead, I enrolled in a business school as I needed to become economically independent and I thought this the fastest route. Until I married at the age of 25, and for a short while after marriage, I worked as a Company secretary. I began voice lessons as soon as I became employed. I left my job 2 months after marriage when I became pregnant as that was the Company policy then. But the voice lessons that I had begun as soon as I started working continued until quite recently.

I always wanted to further my formal education. I knew somehow I had sabotaged two dreams. I concentrated on my third, my singing, when I became a full-time wife and mother, living as a family on a small salary, having inexpensive fun times with friends, nurturing and teaching my small boys. I was the key soloist and choir member at a church for 24 years and also remained with the Opera chorus for 32 years. As well, my voice instructors would recommend me, so I sang at many church-related functions throughout the city. My world to a great extent became my voice, my music.

Our children were still pre-school age when my husband decided he would like to become a doctor and we moved to another province. It was a mutual decision that I stay home and I didn't find that difficult as I very much believe in the values I was taught, particularly by my mother. While my husband was studying though, I also emotionally began questing for more satisfaction in my life. You see, in my life nothing was feeling the way I wanted it to feel. I continued singing and nurturing our children while becoming the encourager of my student-husband with almost a spiritual-type zeal. I would pray for him while he was busy writing an exam; I proofread and typed his papers. During those years I also took the leading role in a musical production which I now find rather ironic considering the character I portrayed. I believe a modern version has altered the role somewhat, but at that time within this musical production, this wife rationalized her husband's beatings as an expression of his love, her growth as transcending her experiences into an increased spiritual love for him. I see now it was very much a patriarchal cultural message for women.

We returned to our home Province when my husband graduated as a doctor, living in a small country community relatively close to the capital city for several years before he bought his own practice. It was during this time that I became aware of my husband's

philandering. In fact, I witnessed this on one occasion but I was heavily into denial at that stage. I thought that if I prayed enough, loved him enough, kept my mouth shut appropriately, kept personally soul-searching to become really, really wise, made good enough cinnamon buns and became a terrific Mum, that all of this together would be powerful enough to eventually change him. I now place all of those denial responses under one great big word, HOPE. For me one of the most difficult of times was to come to the naked, desert realization that I had no power over him, but only over my own survival. You see, I didn't want any of my relationship reality to be true so I didn't want to see! I now know that the likelihood of an abusive man changing his behaviour is dismal, especially if committed to what I call emptiness. I also now know it's not my business.

My hope has evolved to me now. But to make that transitional change has been like a death and resurrection, very painful. I now am starting to have more and more self-esteem and am realizing the value of being my own best friend. Those two are related. But there were periods to now when I felt so little inside, so fragile, whereas as a child I had felt like quite a young, strapping plant. I believe now that throughout my marriage I was being subtly controlled.

As a couple, we sought help about five times. The first time was when I was in my late 30s when we briefly visited a medical doctor. This doctor listened to what I said, then basically gave my husband a scolding about his self-important attitude, while I was given prescription drugs to calm down, to cope. Some years later, though, I realized that whatever was going on in my marriage had to stop. I was working at the time, as my parents had loaned us money to buy our home and I was paying off that loan. I was also involved with singing and leading a choir in a local church, singing in the Opera chorus, and taking voice lessons. My husband said we couldn't afford to go for marriage counselling. So I used money I had earned singing at a funeral. We visited a Pastoral Institute and it was most unhelpful. On the way my husband deliberately drove dangerously, driving both lanes of the highway, hugging the edges. Looking back, I think the counsellor was out of his depth. I don't think he knew the issues of wife abuse at all, the issues of power and control, so he gave no directives that worked. My husband was able to intimidate him. I remember leaving that office feeling defeated. Several years later we moved to another community into my husband's own practice where I worked in the front office. So again, my focus was on our mutual success together as a couple. Meanwhile the abuse had not stopped and I had now reached the place where I knew somehow it must! I telephoned a city agency and was given the number of a counsellor. As I frequently went into the city it was simple to stop by. By that time my situation had become so bad that I could hardly think straight any longer. I felt as if I were going crazy. I was nearing 45 years of age and only now did I see that either I would stay in this marriage as it was, basically losing my mental health and my joy in life, or I had to leave. We now had been married for 18 years.

Well, I stayed. I had found a facilitator and a group that was very helpful, and my husband had begun similar therapy in a male group, so I had hope that he was changing. I now know

that an abused woman either stays and takes what that brings, or gets out, because I now know I could not change him and I did not change him.

Our facilitator at that time was completing a graduate degree and was very open to sharing what she was studying which I believe was one of the great gifts I have received. I wanted more in life and I tried to assimilate what she was telling us. She had great patience. You see, one's whole value system changes and that takes time. It was her group therapy that was so helpful. I know now it was a feminist therapy in addition to an eclectic, theoretical, humanist approach that included gestalt and some behaviorism. It was in this group that I learned I was not alone. I heard other women's stories that I could empathize with and I could also share my own experiences. And all this time, I had believed the problem was me! After all, that is what I had been taught and had internalized. I was well indoctrinated. But now I was learning differently in a group setting, listening to other women's experiences, what was and wasn't working for them. Watching what seemed to me to be mistakes actually made me become more responsible for my own behavior. Now I know our leader was helping us to see that this was a systemic problem within a patriarchal system. What I was experiencing and how I was behaving was absolutely normal given the chaos.

This leader encouraged us to take personal responsibility for ourselves. On the one hand it felt so good to be heard, so good to hear that my feelings were normal under the circumstances, and yet on the other hand it called me to do something that would take me away from the pain and the abuse which for me was very frightening as I was dependent on my husband financially and emotionally. My self-esteem had been eroded so that I didn't feel I could survive in the world; to think of not being with him was terrifying! I learned to keep a journal where I described my feelings. Recently I came across one entry I wrote some 15 years ago where I was comparing my emotional and psychic state to that of being still in an egg without the shell having even been cracked open. I know that there was a certain truth to that metaphor because now I know that the shell has fallen away and I am finally growing. But at that time I was still feeling constraint, knowing that whatever my purpose in life was to be, I hadn't come face to face with it.

In group there was such a commonality. There were a lot of tears and generally hugs at the end of each session. Our group was made up of a cross-section of women from the inner city to wealthy suburbia, so we came from a variety of background and life experiences. This experience impacted my life so I could never be the same again. I learned to pour out my feelings to people I could trust. I gave myself permission to cry, to face my losses and to feel them deeply. I still keep in contact with some of these women and all of us speak about various aspects of our current life history when we get together.

The group therapy lasted 10 weeks, broken into three phases. At the end of phase one, I was invited into phase two. Only at the end of phase two did I become ready to really take any action so the leader invited me to repeat that phase, which I did. She then invited me into phase three which was volunteer training. I suppose this group facilitator saw I wanted to

stay involved with her as a volunteer. It was as if this was my umbilical cord to new learning. I was so afraid I would fall back into my dismal existence if I didn't keep seeing this light which I now know was self-empowerment. We still received learning materials, but we now all realized that we were informally learning how to facilitate each other, and also were gaining the knowledge to assist someone else. I see now that this phase focused toward societal change, but I didn't really see that then. As a part of my own growth, this group impacted my life. By being very open to working on my own life, I had found a way to take action and a place that gave me hope that I wasn't one of God's burnt cookies. There was a place for me. Then a huge change occurred. After 7 years of therapy, my former husband simply threw it all away and discarded me as well. That forced me into worse than words can describe.

You see, during the time my husband was in his group therapy I believed he was genuine. His behavior seemed to be improving, so I again had hope that a companionate spirit and a warmth towards our children was a reality almost within our grasp. I was so grateful to God because I thought there had been a miracle. So on the cognitive, feeling, and spiritual level, I felt hopeful, I had developed trust in him anew, and I had learned to love this man again. I also had a renewed enthusiasm for life after women's therapy when I began studying, beginning with upgrading high school subjects. I found studying and learning so exciting. I knew on a gut level that I needed to study formally. As my quest for new learning began to grow, music began to hold less importance. It had been an important part of my identity, a coping strategy as I see now. Being a doctor's wife was inflated significance. I'd almost completed my BA when my husband left me. I am now finishing my BSW.

I was in my early 50s when I realized our marriage was over. He had yet another affair, this time blatant. My entire life was crushed, smashed, and obliterated. I was left like pieces of rubble and broken earth, but I had no choice if any self-esteem lay in me at all. I needed to serve divorce papers on that man as he was in the process of crushing my soul and spirit. For approximately 2 years all I wanted was silence; music only intensified the pain. I didn't want to sing as I had no joy, but I forced myself to continue with the Opera chorus. I knew I had to keep pushing on. Sometimes even now I still have to turn the music off, but every morning I listen to Mozart.

Each step has been so huge, but I have been breaking out of my eggshell. One of the tragedies of abuse is that it crushes being a self. And so, in one way or another, people who are abused live life with less vibrance than they otherwise would. But as my studies progressed, I was consistently delighted in what I discovered about myself. I was amazed at the way I could keep at it. I had very few failures and I was amazed at how interesting the various texts and materials were. I was making marks that I didn't know lay within me, I was enjoying the professors, and giving up my singing seemed less of a sacrifice. I was also finding that people in my life were respecting what I was doing, and the conversations with my two sons were becoming more interesting as we discussed some of our studies. Then I decided I wanted to see some places I had studied and I began travelling.

In these 8 years I've been studying I have become a single woman. But I am doing remarkably well as I learn to be independent again. My way of viewing me has changed; my way of viewing people has changed. The love that I have for my friends has become so much richer. My concept of God is different! My empathy for pain is different as my social and cultural sensitivity is deeper and bigger. I am now what could be called a feminist. I will say though that I believe that I am a feminist of love. I see a very close comparison between Christ's teachings and the basic principles of feminism. I see the gender roles under patriarchy a tragedy for both men and women.

My medical doctor is very supportive and I have used professional counsellors but I also have healed on another level among friends who listen. I use my mother as a role model. She was a woman of wisdom, courage, and love. For her, Christianity meant the teachings of Christ, not the dogma of the church, not the patriarchal structure of organized institutions but a personal relationship with the spirit. I know right now she would say, "Iris, go for it, take that Master's degree, work with the abused woman." A very current role model is the head of an abused women's agency who also experienced wife abuse. She is a woman of humor, openness, humility, and compassion. I also admire Nellie McClung's sense of humor and her social activism.

I think about what I want to do each day. I am applying—and hopefully will be accepted into—an MSW somewhere. I hope someone will take a delightful, middle-aged woman like me. I know I want to counsel battered women. As I work with women, I realize I have something to give of value, some based on life experience. I also believe I know some of the areas I need to be especially careful in because of my own experience. I am very sensitive to what personal experiences will be helpful and what would be a hindrance. I also am aware I need to know that really well! Last year I had a job working with battered women. Currently I am working as a counsellor in a casual position at a Women's Shelter.

I see myself growing old with some dignity, knowing that I have been a female in a patriarchal culture that is not user friendly for women generally speaking, and I have seized the challenge to survive and given it a hell of a good try! As my body ages, I want the spiritual soulfulness to increase. I may not be teaching in a classroom, but my counselling is a sharing of knowledge, teaching one-on-one, learning from each woman. As in my adolescence, I want to be a real person, both intellectually and emotionally. My goal is still personal growth. I know I want communication together with love, warmth, empathy, and compassion for other human beings. I am sad that so much time was spent suffering with an abusive man. However, I am grateful for everything I've learned. I know there is more suffering ahead, but there's an acceptance. And I believe that you've got to give out. It really is, on a deep level, a privilege to walk this journey.

When women's reproductive usefulness disappears in menopause, women become

the sexually disappeared. . . . The de-eroticized and neutered older woman . . . has become untouchable. (Freuh, 1994, p. 266)

Be a noble woman—Iris's mother.

Foreword

Possibly, Freuh succinctly expresses Iris's initial disillusionment, her sense of defeat and sense of being a social outcast when her marriage of 25 years ended, she the one left. She was 52 years old at the time, feeling very vulnerable, very much alone, and understandably fear-filled and anxiety-ridden when she considered her future. She had largely been a professional homemaker and now could count on little economic return for her 25 years of commitment. She was also justifiably concerned about her employment possibilities. Even so, goal oriented and highly motivated, Iris was determined that somehow this loss in her life would become her growth.

We had first met in the Opera chorus when both in our early 30s but, singing in different sections, the contact was relatively superficial as were our conversations at the occasional social function. Now we reconnected, sitting at some distance from each other in a library, sharing our breaks. This practice continued until Iris graduated with her BSW and was accepted into an MSW in Calgary. At times she struggled with her grief and loss while simultaneously learning some relationship consequences for women in her situation, particularly at her age. Through her texts, she became well aware that aging as analyzed and statistically presented, disadvantages and may even humiliate the older woman. I saw physical, affective, and cognitive challenges, and Iris's empowerment and evolving process towards her ultimate success. Despite these recent interactions, her interview contained lifeworld experiences I did not know.

Iris's Crisis: her Anomie

Iris's key issues involved her ethical integrity and challenged her total Being, her Essence of Self. Not only did she confront a husband's betrayal and her corresponding loss of hope,

but this loss challenged her core values and belief systems in a religious/spiritual commitment to relationship, the honor of her Christian God, and the integrity of the institution of her values indoctrination since birth. Using her grief and pain to fuel her future, slowly and systematically, Iris is transferring that hope formerly invested in her husband and an institutional belief system to an I/Thou self. As she has said, "My concept of God is different." Religious dogma appears to have been critically appraised by Iris, the core Christian principles have surfaced and Iris's spiritual development is taking precedence. Following her personal parallel between a "feminism of love" and "the teachings of Christ," her commitment to her new profession, I believe, signifies that for Iris, her core belief system rather than discarded, has been conscientized, reflected upon, and refined into an ethic of caring away from ritualized morality towards the praxis of living one's I/Thou education, one's experiences, and a critically selected core code of ethics. What appears to be Iris's Essence of Self and *how* did she accomplish this praxis?

Essence of Self

When asked how she visualized her personal future self, her presentation, Iris spoke unhesitatingly. She will continue concentrating on "soulfulness, growing old with some dignity and as woman to woman, sharing our knowledge." So, *Iris's motivation, her female energy, engages a balance of the spiritual, the intellectual, and the affective, with her body as her messenger.* How has Iris been moving towards this goal?

Praxis: Conscientizing her Reality

True change is a matter of worthwhile conflict, for it leads through the painful consciousness of one's position to a new conscience in that position. (Erikson, 1964, p. 30)

Betrayal of intimacy: a husband's rejection. For Iris, her marriage was her commitment, her *vocation*. While Iris did not become a teacher or a missionary, perhaps one could say that she channelled these two dreams into her marriage. Using "lots of hope," as she said, "living in some kind of a strange dream," she strove with "almost a spiritual-type zeal" toward

making a home, toward experiencing as reality a mutuality of warmth, companionship and affection with a "loving husband." Through various nurturing and teaching-type activities, Iris focused her energies as well on her children. For 25 years she pursued this goal of a vibrant and joy-filled relationship and home life, only to view its near-fulfillment in the end a mirage. The worked-towards intimacy of friendship within a traditional family setting had failed. Worse, Iris viewed her husband as having achieved his aspired-after goals, particularly his social status, while she, depleted of her youthful optimism and trust, was now left scrambling for her social dignity, her social identity and acceptance. The patriarchal marriage rule-book had left her feeling dependent and a non-entity, living within someone else's aura.

That was understandable, given her Christian background together with the sociohistorical 1940s-1950s reinforcement. Iris's *first* duty was towards the wellbeing and enhancement of her husband and children, while problems likely were *her* attitudinal problem, her selfishness. Internalizing these values, she had focused her primary energies on her husband and children, on enlarging their potentialities, encouraging and contributing towards their achieving success. As indoctrinated, Iris had made her mission in life her family, her reward to be ultimately vicarious inclusion, at her husband's discretion, into *his* acquired social and economic status.

While it can be seen that Iris had not invested her entire identity in her husband and her children, nevertheless what was still required when the marriage ended was a transferring of that concentration of energy, that ethic of care, away from her husband toward herself and out of victimization and exploitation. *Rather than an identity problem or identity diffusion, Iris's process seems to have been more identity acknowledgment and ownership.* Involving her sociocultural, socioreligious and socioeconomic future identity as it did, Iris's task was to refocus "the actually attained but forever-to-be-revised sense of reality of the Self within social reality" (Erikson, 1968, p. 211). It was imperative to move beyond the traumatic pain, loneliness, loss and grief of her *perceived* personal failure and beyond her fear of possibly

becoming a social outcast, or worse, a welfare recipient. One observes Iris's courage and fortitude as she finds employment in her new vocation, no small feat perhaps in the 1990s decade of corporate downsizing and profit ratio.

Iris's difficult learning curve, then, was to spiritually, affectively and cognitively relinquish her former husband's exploitation of her talents and of her psyche as she identified and transferred those same gifts towards generativity of the commonweal. Rather than her nurturing role being the wrong choice, her husband had exploited her ethic of caring; what was required now was that Iris first nurture her Self. For feminist therapists this may involve an agonizing process as a woman moves towards self-care. Her body tonus (energy, posture, expressiveness) would reveal her journey.

Psychosocial costs of the ethic of caring. Socioculturally and socioreligiously constructed, especially during adolescence, a female is traditionally encouraged into primarily nurturing service. This service may be anticipated by both genders within a home and/or service or professional sector. When this nurturing is devalued, whether within the home or within an institution, for a woman focused on relationship, such as Iris was taught (and chose to do), this oftentimes, as Brown and Gilligan's (1992) research showed, requires a "giving up of voice, an abandonment of self, for the sake of becoming a good woman and having relationships" (p. 2). Meanwhile, as the authors continue, the "privileged" male insulates and isolates himself, focusing primarily on *his* goals and *his* profile "as if [he were] autonomous and self-governing, free to speak and move as [he] pleased" irrespective of relationship" (p. 2). In so doing, from within this culturally constructed position, it can be argued, then, that if a male *chooses*, he can readily justify domination and control as institutionally "ordained."

This, I believe, was Iris's dilemma, a rite of passage she confronted from age 30 on. One ascertains from the interview material that Iris faced progressively more destructive wife abuse as she focused more on *her* self-enhancement together with that of her husband's. As

her husband appears to have become progressively more narcissistic, so Iris struggled harder to maintain her myth of a relationship. She continued to cling to hope for as long as she could. Nevertheless, despite her effortful attempts, despite her prayers, he left (first affectively, then physically). Now Iris confronted what women in this situation come slowly to know. That, depending upon one's level of values, a person will leave if he/she wants; will destroy if he/she chooses. That ultimately, all one has in life is one's self and one's chosen ethical code. According to Erikson (1978), the choice of that code indicates the life pathway one will select, leading towards generativity and ego integrity (a feeling that one's life as lived has been worthwhile), or stagnation towards a gradual slide into despair, where one recognizes an emptiness together with the realisation that at some life point, one's life had become a busy void.

When her husband left her, Iris, still subscribing to institutional, sociocultural reinforcement, took the onus upon herself. "He discarded me," she said, rather than seeing that he may have misplaced or even lost his honor, despite having long recognized his "philandering." However, by concentrating on her development, acknowledging and grieving her losses, she inched forward, testing her mettle, her strengths of character reawakening towards herself and community. This process of reconnecting with herself and becoming her "own best friend" took approximately 5 years, during which time she rediscovered her mettle, some strengths of her character, and the realisation and recognition of how her lifeworld experiences would facilitate women experiencing similarly. *How* did she achieve this?

Removing the myths. During her 30s, Iris had followed the patriarchal route. She blamed herself, tried harder, prayed, and kept up public appearances. At her instigation, this couple sought a male doctor's advice and while she received medication to numb her affect, "given prescription drugs to calm down, to cope," her husband was advised to modify his behavior, "basically, a scolding about his self-important attitude!" The medication did not help, the abuse continued, she still felt the pain. She tried harder. Again, at her instigation, they visited a Pastoral Institute where (from her perspective, as she reported) her husband

manipulated the male counsellor by "intimidating him." Worse, the suggested advice simply did not work. Her husband's behavioral patterns continued to worsen and she fell into further despair and defeat. "The abuse had not stopped; she felt as if she "were going crazy."

For approximately 10 years, from her mid-30s to her mid-40s, Iris lived her reality virtually alone within a nuclear-family zone, keeping up the public facade of a functional family home life while emotionally isolated, living within the shadow of her husband's public and professional persona and his charm. The medical and religious institutions had not helped. It was an all-women's group who finally removed the myth that it was *her* personality problem. As Iris said, "I know now it was a feminist therapy in addition to an eclectic, theoretical, humanist approach that included gestalt and behaviorism." It was within this group setting that Iris learned she "was not alone;" that in fact, to varying degrees along a continuum, each woman's experiences were similar to her own. Strengthening within this experience, Iris retrieved a part of an adolescent dream. She *would* explore her belief that she did indeed have an intellect, a brain. She returned to studies, continuing her music, her aesthetic or creative-affective balance. As she said, "When I was an adolescent I wanted an intellectual approach as well as being a real person, I wanted both feeling and cognition." Aged 48, Iris was at last on the way. Aged 56, using courage, tenacity, discipline and initiative, she had removed the myth of intellectual and emotional incompetence, although scars will possibly remain. As Erikson mentioned, "It is the joint development of cognitive and emotional powers paired with appropriate social learning which enables the individual to realise the potentialities of a stage" (1978, p. 225).

Retrieving her character strengths: the political is personal. Iris was experiencing her academic successes and furthering her understanding both through group participation and volunteer work from her mid-40s through her mid-50s. In her late 40s, she "was finding that people in [her] life were respecting what [she] was doing" and she was enjoying the animated discussions with her two sons, also university students at that time.

Acknowledging loss. In her early 40s, Iris journalled herself as "still within the egg." In her early 50s she "realized the marriage was over," as her husband was crushing her spirit." It seems that her husband acknowledged her academic successes of her late 40s and early 50s with varying degrees of hostility, distance, disinterest, and assumed interest before finally delivering his ultimate punishment by leaving. Perhaps Iris was to fear success and instead become a joyless shadow figure. Initially, she lost hope, her home became tomb-like as she no longer listened to her music, the signifier of Iris's spiritual and affective wellbeing. She struggled with the legitimacy of her religion. Even God was absent. Iris felt totally alone! Yet, "suffering which is accepted and received with dignity eventuates in deepened sensitivity. One cannot be sensitive without knowing loneliness" (Moustakas, 1961, p. 101). So Iris experienced. At first "all she wanted was silence," but she kept studying. When the silence became too overwhelming, she studied elsewhere—the library, a café. And she kept herself actively involved in her studies, volunteer work, opera fantasy-world, and her friendships. "To make that transitional change [was] like a death and resurrection, painful."

Towards Ego Integrity Within Generativity

As we explore our highest potential, we find that it is necessarily actualized in the social and interpersonal context—in the I/Thou relationship where genuine dialogue, co-existence, expectancy and love are the highest expression of hope and human behaviour. (Macnab, 1989, p. 243)

Initiative and independence. At 41 years of age, Iris had felt constraint in her life, a "knowing" that she was somehow still in her shell. Ten years later, her breakthrough, her catalyst, demanded facing what she most feared, her marriage *failure* despite her taking responsibility and trying to be the good wife, despite her effort and attention. Not only discarded by her husband, Iris experienced herself as a "social reject," so whether valid or not, she struggled with shame, humiliation, and altered social spaces. She now confronted her most difficult life passage, finding a way to turn her losses into gains.

What, then, was Iris's mettle? It is contained in her key turnaround sentence, "I wasn't one

of God's burnt cookies," that, at the age of 48, had given Iris her momentum to begin formal studies. She focused her initiative towards independence, continuing her education and volunteer work toward economic self-sufficiency, viewing her university opportunities as one significant passport towards achieving a professional status in an area she felt was her new vocation. Armed with academic credentials, tenacity, humor, and a developing knowledge of the Essence of her Self, Iris intended assisting primarily women confused about their domestic situation as she once had been. Quietly and systematically enlarging her circle of facilitators and friends through a combination of her music, her studies and fellow students, her career path and her volunteer work, Iris has moved beyond even perhaps what she imagined possible. *Iris's key issue may have been a husband's betrayal and her corresponding loss of hope, but with courage and vision she has resurrected, reconstructed and transferred that hope to herself and is finding her trust well founded.* As she step-by-step recovers her vitality, correspondingly, her social spaces enlarge. Consequently, she is now experiencing a widening social circle of group and institutional acceptance, respect and inclusion. "The way of loving therefore becomes both an act of grace and a task of our responsiveness. We emerge from the pain of our losses to convert our lost love into a new love of compassion and care" (Macnab, 1989, p. 245).

Identity: recognition and ownership. It is conceivable that while Iris struggled to evolve towards the Essence of her Self from her early 30s onwards, her husband correspondingly concentrated on his "idealized self," which, according to Horney (1956), is a drive for success, money, power, and ambition, which lessens "peace of mind, inner security or joy of living" (p. 229). Fortunately, Iris's *identity*, and perhaps in retrospect her psychological survival throughout her marriage and during the following 5 years, was her music, specifically her voice. Iris had remained in charge of this aspect of her life; thus, I feel, affectively maintaining her self-esteem both prior to returning to her studies and especially once she challenged her underdeveloped and unique potentialities within both a university setting and in her practicum experiences. I believe that the drama and fantasy of the opera stage maintained Iris's vitality and vibrance especially while married, while her soloist and

regular weekly singing engagements by ongoingly reinforcing self-validation, possibly prevented a total emotional and intellectual disintegration. Singing maintained Iris's Essence of Self and her identity.

Internalized psychosocial enablers. Perhaps Iris received her first gift from her mother, encapsulated in her mother's words, "Be a noble woman." Despite a fundamentalist religious environment within a protective community, Iris describes her mother as having the perception and strength of character to view beyond her church's dogma and tradition to the core of the Christian belief system. In crisis, Iris appears to have arrived at a personal understanding of the depth of these words as she endeavours to encapsulate their meaning in a lifestyle of dignity and acceptance towards her intellect, affect, spirit, and body. She seems to be drawing her boundaries against rigidity of doctrine and dogmatism, while understanding another's place in time. Since the age of 30, when Iris first sought professional advice, she has increasingly paid attention to her intuitive voice, noting at significant points in her life when something does "not feel right for me," then engaging her intellect in attempting to resolve her personal disquiet. One observes her tenacity in her strength of purpose while still giving herself permission to grieve her losses. By identifying those losses, by experiencing their negative effect and affect and using these experiences for direction (e.g., volunteer work in the Women's Shelter, her studies towards working with women who have experienced abusive relationships), Iris appears to have enabled herself to concentrate on her successes, on a positive outcome, viewing her difficulties it seems as potentially life enhancing.

Psychosocial enablers: the role of external support systems and players. Ultimately, while one may grieve alone, no person can maintain his/her humanity or identity without connection. There were three significant influences as Iris recovered her sense of direction and purpose.

Professional one-gender group therapy. It can be argued that had Iris not made a social

contract with her Essence of Self, contacted—and enlightened herself—within a women's group, she would not have had the stamina to leave her marriage at 52 years of age. From her account, it was this group experience, plus her decision to learn through participation and listening, and eventually co-leading, that gave her the courage to return to the classroom. What were some qualities of this therapy that enabled Iris to recognise her despair and recover her self-confidence?

Women's therapy: an eclectic approach. The aim of this therapeutic approach "is to help a woman see how her own power as an individual is inextricably bound to the collective power of women as a group" (Greenspan, 1993, p. 247). This approach enables a woman to develop her own network and support her own gender, much as males have done throughout their history. Perhaps first and foremost, Iris's victim label, *her* supposed pathological disorder, was systematically removed, revealing a toxic environment. During those weeks of group therapy, invalidation became validation, devaluation became valuation. Iris learned that, when she spoke, her words were heard, she could share her concerns, she could observe similarities and differences. Rather than criticism, she received acceptance, even affirmation. She experienced compassionate cooperation, gradually becoming more aware of the relationship between her inner psychic life and her interpersonal and institutional experiences.

As the 10 weeks progressed, Iris became more aware that her problem was only partly hers. As she said,

I had believed the problem was me! After all, that is what I had been taught and had internalized. I was well indoctrinated. But now I was learning differently in a group setting, listening to other women's experiences . . . Now I know our leader was helping us to see that this is a systemic problem within a patriarchal system. What I was experiencing and how I was behaving was absolutely normal given the chaos.

That within the patriarchal construct, in fact at the grassroots level within all institutions, the sociocultural indoctrination women receive does not serve them well (Durkheim, 1897/1951; Erikson, 1968; Greenspan, 1993). Rather than trying harder, continuing as the

victim by blaming herself, she began to trust herself again, to trust her own answers for her life. Viewing the world through her own lens, Iris slowly returned her energy, psyche, and power to herself and towards empowerment of women. Moreover, she now had some tools to move beyond victimization, whether individual or institutional. Iris faced betrayal, both within her home space as well as within some institutional spaces. She became aware of herself within her social context (the environmental and interpersonal dynamics). She did her own homework. Rather than focusing on her husband, Iris now focused on how she could help herself. In short, she moved away from "denial" and "the desert realization that [she] had no power over him; that he was responsible for his own behavior," and not she—away from her self-abuse in trying harder, and towards her own self-care. For Iris, too, the sense of touch was important to retrieve her Self, her body, her cognitive skills and her affectivity. This sense of touch was through the medium of hugs, largely a woman's touch, non-phallic. Perhaps while Iris felt that what was required was to move beyond denial, one could also appreciate the massive shift in perspective, the shift in values required. Perhaps by self-labelling her conscientizing process as denial, Iris inadvertently victimised herself during her passage away from, and out of, an abusive environment.

The therapeutic role of laypersons: family and friends. As Iris said, within a small circle of carefully selected female friends she learned to trust again. She became aware of unanticipated vulnerabilities of some family members. She learned—and developed her understanding towards—the sensitivities and disinclination on the part of some to become involved or appreciate her singleness. She accepted their hesitancy as their present rung on the ladder of personal growth. She learned with whom it was "okay to pour out one's feelings," noting, as she said, the value of time and caring in a layperson's approach to loss and grieving. She developed a higher regard, respect and appreciation for female friendship and camaraderie. As she grew in self-confidence, so Iris diversified her network. Of her three mentors, two concentrate on an individual in her setting, and are from her current vocational background. The third, Nellie McClung, was cultural-historical in impact. All three mentors validate women's experiences together with their dignity.

Afterword.

Every time you meet a situation, though you think at the time it is an impossibility and you go through the tortures of the damned, once you have met it and lived through it, you find that forever after you are freer than you were before. (Eleanor Roosevelt, source unknown)

Iris's choice was either eventual integrity or despair. Her academic successes upon a foundation of group therapy and the realities of her day-to-day existence focused her determinedly toward her Essence of Self. The cost initially was enormous in the depths of grief. When her husband left her, her "entire life was crushed, smashed, and obliterated. [She] was left like pieces of rubble and broken earth." The ultimate outcome is more than she had ever thought possible. Whereas her aesthetic, artistic side had enabled her throughout 25 years of relationship struggle, her lesser-developed intellectual side now came to the fore. Her spiritual self underwent a massive shift from an externally mandated religion to an internalised spiritual self resulting in her belief system becoming more focused and generative both towards herself and community. Perhaps Iris has shown that, to blossom at middle life beyond the fragile flower, one moves at times intuitively towards one's strengths, at times unsure of what those strengths even are. Moreover, what one has been taught to fear may be also the way back to one's Essence of Self.

In 1999 Iris completed her MSW and presently counsells in the area of family violence. She appears to know when it is right to close a chapter, such as leaving the Opera chorus once her intellectual academic goal had been realised and a professional identity was possible. Iris both absorbs and relates experiences within a network of friendship and associates. One observes her compassionate integrity as she maintains her former social position even though presently somewhat economically disadvantaged. Her sons and her family of origin have become even more a component of her concern and wellbeing. From a patriarchal, traditional family and religious paradigm, Iris has moved generatively into, at times unfamiliar, sociocultural and socio-economic territory with her ego integrity intact. Iris concluded her interview, "I know there's more suffering ahead. But it is an acceptance. And

I believe that you've got to give out. It really is, on a deep level, a privilege to walk this journey." It is becoming a noble woman.

Nobility might be defined as the capacity not to regress in response to degradation, not to become blunted in the face of pain, to tolerate the agonizing and remain intact. (Peck, 1983, p. 222)

A Synopsis and a Prelude

Ten women have spoken in an authentic voice about their experiences of bridging into their middle years, into middle adulthood. As a composite of these ten women's life experiences, 8 primary themes emerged: 1) Socialization, 2) Conscientizing, 3) Personal Tasks, 4) Centering the Self, 5) Self and Relationships, 6) Environmental Relationship Impact, 7) Spiritual Development, and 8) Wisdom. A woman's adolescent Dream, developmental tasks undertaken when bridging her 50s, and her Essence of Self are connected.

Sociocultural and psychosocial gender-construction languaging practices are the medium used to shape a pre-adolescent girl into culture's woman. The psychological construction of a female towards her future economic role and social status causes adolescent "dissociation and disconnection which play a central role in women's psychological lives" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 17). The ideology of the Perfect Woman and the 1950s Modern Girl developmentally stunts, even cripples, females. How the process is accomplished, with what results, becomes a point of comparison with women entering their middle years. The individual and institutional social power practices a woman experiences as she bridges her middle years noticeably influence her self-actualizing potential—her psychological health. Her personal identity, integrity and her Essence of Self are inter- and intra-psychologically scrutinized. Components of her intellectual, aesthetic, body, and religious/spiritual self-worth likely are subjected to criticism. She likely will experience anomie.

In conscientizing, a woman becomes aware of the conversational, written, media, and silencing, languaging practices. Heeding her own voice becomes an imperative, that first stepping stone towards her inner strength and authentic Self. Quality relationships are the second stepping stone. Why? "Obstacles to relationships among women and between women and girls are built into institutions, including schools." (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 163). Ten women value relationships. These relationships include networks, mentor(s), friends, and family intergenerationally along a woman's life journey. How these elements interact enable her to play out events, to reach decisions, to determine her direction.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

Woman Aging, and her Adolescent Dream

LOOKING BACK, I can now perceive myself, a woman already in her sixties, engrossed in the question of what alterations in her life a woman might undertake upon turning fifty. This turning point of fifty, I had become convinced, ought to form as vital a milestone in a woman's life as graduation, promotion, marriage, or the birth or adoption of a child. (Heilbrun, 1997, p. 1)

For the female, her adolescence and bridging her 50s are the two most intergenerationally significant and crucial of all of life's passages. Nearing her 50th year, the issue becomes primarily continuing, selecting, enlarging, and socioculturally maintaining an identity. Here, once again, a woman may struggle against the stream of collective consciousness, of present political and economic realities concerning her to-be-defined social place and space, and of her culturally historical secular and religious "reality" of herself as Female: Woman, Aging. However, perhaps a woman may experience herself differently. While there may be a psychosocial script for Human: Female, Self, since her adolescence she has accumulated life experiences.

As has been seen, a woman is also a social actor who, within a democracy, can act that script according to the integrity of her ego (her core values). Patriarchally based institutions may be the writers, presuming and assuming directorship of her life script, but she, as actor, interprets it. She may choose to craft the dialogue, events, and internalised experiences uniquely, bringing that script to life for observers around her. At some point, she may assume directorship. Dependent upon her life experiences—peak experiences and traumatic moments—she chooses whether her life will mirror social expectations, or whether she will evolve her life according to her direction, uniquely, as a work of art. Something may drive her from within, as Julia said. This final chapter will explore some common threads that weave the fabric of these 10 women's lives? First, there will be a brief review of the formation of a woman's psychosocial self (for a more detailed description, see Chapter II).

The Sociocultural and Psychosocial Construction of Female as Young Adult

In the main, as is the young male, the young woman is malleable, pliable, and vulnerable in her need to belong in the adult world. A female's adolescence is not more difficult because her hormonal changes are more "in your face" than a male's adolescence, but rather because the "I" of her Essence of Self (her authentic Self) becomes subjected to the critical scrutiny of her culture's institutional, omnipresent and omniscient patriarchal voices and eyes—the male/female conformists' circles. She is to become self-conscious rather than Self conscious. Approaching her adolescent years, to the degree that a girl has largely succeeded in autonomy of spirit, will and purpose, and to the degree she has maintained the authentic voice of her Self, she will likely experience anomie. What value and social validation her father places on her emerging Self (intellect, affect, and body) is crucial.

Brown and Gilligan (1992), and Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1995) interviewed American pre-adolescent and adolescent females from middle and upper-class homes attending a private-girls' school, and girls from working-class and welfare backgrounds labelled "at risk," attending public high schools. Carefully crafted languaging practices intentionally gendered these enthusiastic students towards self-silencing and maintenance of their respective adult social "place" and spaces—at the one end, to attain that impossible "perfect girl" image, at the other, to avoid any gossip or rumours that would label them "sexually promiscuous." Whether socioculturally or socioeconomically mainstream or marginalized girls, the patriarchal intention is to compartmentalize each female into her gender-lessening sociocultural position, primarily targetting how she is to view and to use her body and voice (biology, cognition and affect). Image, jealousy, and rivalry replace relationships. As the study progresses, the researchers and the girls' teachers realize what they are witnessing, and the girls experiencing, is not dissimilar from what they, in turn, had experienced, internalised, and modelled, as adolescents.

In Australia and New Zealand of the 1950s, the adolescent girl was to become a "modern"

girl, "moulded and shaped to please, to put others at their ease, and to pose no challenge" (Johnson, 1993, p. 125). In the main, she, too, was encouraged through educational practices and media coverage to suppress her uniqueness, to comply with the norm, or to risk social isolation. According to Johnson, with few exceptions a girl's innate abilities and interests were ignored and short-term employment encouraged before reaching her ultimate goal of marriage, the husband the "breadwinner," the wife the economic dependent. Media coverage of the time, though, indicated long-term and newly-formed loyal female friendships within which one discussed situations, where opinions and ideas were anticipated, and the norm.

The ideology of the Perfect Woman and this 1950s Modern Girl developmentally stunts, even cripples, females. Iris, for example, had lived within this male construction of who she was *allowed* to be, and had internalized the image of the Perfect Woman. Iris spoke quietly,

I was well indoctrinated. It was a mutual decision that I stay home. I nurtured our children and encouraged my student-husband. I prayed for him while he was busy writing exams; I proofread and typed his paper. But in my life, nothing was feeling the way I wanted it to feel.

Nearing her 50th year, Iris had no internalized adolescent or young-adult independent-self identity to retrieve. As The Perfect Woman, Iris "was well indoctrinated into denial," her behavior dependent upon her husband's approval or disapproval, his controlling behavior and spouse abuse (physical, verbal, emotional) was covertly institutionally supported. Until her 43rd year, as Iris said in the interview, she had believed that if she "would love him enough, be the terrific Mum, pray enough, be really, really wise, and really loving, keep her mouth shut appropriately, and keep searching on the personal level, that together would produce a power that would eventually change him." So she encouraged *his* growth, *his* professional advancement, *his* public profile, took care of their children's social, religious and academic development, and lived through *him*. She was the traditional wife, within a traditional family construct. Singing was the one activity that was hers alone. She could take some time for herself providing she fulfilled her wifely obligations and duties. Her intellectual field lay fallow. As his Dream progressively became reality, her husband's

had uncovered in his interviews, Iris, unfortunately, was "*the special, (loved and loving) woman, [who] like the true mentor, helps to animate the part of the male self that contains the Dream*" (1978, p. 109).

She facilitates . . . She does this partly through her own actual efforts as teacher, guide, host, critic, sponsor. The special woman helps him to shape and live out the Dream: she shares it, believes in him as its hero, gives it her blessing, joins him on the journey and creates a "boundary space" within which his aspirations can be imagined and his hopes nourished. Like the mentor, the special woman is a transitional figure. The special woman can foster his adult aspirations while accepting his dependency, his incompleteness and his need to make her into something more than (and less than) she actually is. (Levinson, 1978, p. 109)

Iris was that transitional figure, that Perfect Woman, that Modern Girl.

As Iris later found, she received the most effective support from women. Iris's primary support was a woman who appropriately shared experience and knowledge. Not until she was 43 years old did Iris move beyond traditional support systems that had proven useless and engage a female group-counselling three-stage process. By then the ongoing spousal abuse had worsened to the point where she could choose, as a male psychologist advised her, the psychiatric ward or death. Two years before her 50th birthday, step by step, Iris seeded her intellectual field, unaware of where the process was taking her. In fact, Iris was retrieving her pre-adolescent independent spirit and vitality. Relatively voiceless (answerable) within her family of origin, Iris's late adolescent and early adult livelihood in a secretarial capacity was dependent and deferential towards male managerial authority. Once married, she was her husband's economic and intellectual dependent. Within her religious-fundamentalist belief system, dogmatically bound, she was a dependent as well. Her diligence, the energy invested in her hope for the relationship, had to be transferred towards new territory—a personal, intellectual awareness that she was a Self rather than a negative of someone else's imprint.

Iris was in search of an identity *she* could be known by. Over the span of 8 years, she transferred that outside control, empowering herself. A male attitude and approach that "It's

all in your head," "Father Knows Best," or as "The Expert," whether religiously, medically, or therapeutically oriented, according to the American psychotherapist, Greenspan (1993), is not as effective as women's therapeutic methods, a combination of various theoretical perspectives together with appropriately shared *female* empathic experiences. Miranda and Malen successfully used alternate women-led therapeutic forms as well.

Conscientizing the Self

At the age of 93 years, Joan Erikson wrote a ninth stage and a preface to *The Life Cycle Completed*, originally written by her husband, and published in 1982 when he was 80 years of age (Appendix F). In her preface, J. Erikson elaborated on what she now saw as the depth of meaning both within ego integrity and wisdom.

Wisdom belongs to the world of actuality to which our senses give us access. . . . It is also the role of wisdom to guide our investment in sight and sound and to focus our capacities on what is relevant, enduring, and nourishing, both for us individually and for the society in which we live." (J. Erikson, 1997, p. 7)

In other words, wisdom incorporates the five senses into the sixth, into an intuitive understanding and, in the process, engages one's identity and generativity (or one's ethic of care responsively and responsibly). Wisdom requires life experiences, involves discerning sensitivity in choices made, responsibilities taken.

Wisdom, therefore, is not the prerogative of the knowledge- or power-brokers; in fact, wisdom may be lacking or absent there. Wisdom is about strength of character, values, and compassion. Ordinary women may become wise women as they age. Reading and reflecting upon 10 women's stories when confronted by life's more difficult assignments, each individual woman sought connection with significant individuals, support of a close friend or friendship circle, and a degree of social acceptance. The voice of each one's Self, especially, needed to be respected, attended to, and heard—and equally so by herself. Dialogue in conversation was essential. How these elements interacted enabled each woman to play out events, to reach decisions, to determine her direction. Belenky and her

researchers also have "found that women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development and the development of a sense of voice, mind, and self were intricately intertwined" (1986, p. 18).

In addition to being Self aware (to Know Thyself) living with integrity also requires body and senses awareness in an I/Thou relationship. A wise person internalises the ethic of care, for wisdom requires the maintenance of one's integrity. As J. Erikson explained,

Integrity has the function of promoting contact with the world, with things, and, above all, with people. It is a tactile and a tangible way to live, not an intangible, virtuous goal to seek after and achieve. . . . It demands no strenuous deliberation or performance, just everyday management of all major and minor activities, with all the steadfast attention to detail necessary for a day well lived. It is all so simple, so direct, and so difficult. (J. Erikson, 1997, p. 8)

An individual's ongoing interpretive understanding of Self identity, then, either encourages or discourages integrity and wisdom. While it is a truism that the only person I can change is myself, it is the *motive* and *internalized values* behind every person's choices that maintain ego integrity, and ultimately Self and social identity. Identity within a spirit of goodwill enables a life lived with integrity. One's identity involves (as one's life) continuous change, which as praxis involves developmental maintenance of the Eriksons' epigenetic strengths and virtues (Appendix F). Gilligan's (1982) ethic of caring, then, is the Eriksons' epigenetic chart in praxis. "True change, as Erikson believed, "is a matter of worthwhile conflict, for it leads through the painful consciousness of one's position to a new conscience in that position" (1964, p. 30). The compassionate understandings that accompany true changes are the foundations of wisdom.

One of the most valuable insights these ten women have shown has been *how* the process of life unfolds the Essence of each Self, (her core identity) and how persistently that process continues as they move through life. Ignoring that inner voice of the Self, or exploring the incorrect pathways towards her centre causes progressively worsening health problems (e.g., Malen's medical and therapeutic explorations). Nature will persist and insist, however,

eventually warning that one is walking in the wrong direction by using one's body to speak in some form of disintegration. The problem of anomie with the corresponding loss of libido or energy then becomes a challenge of just *how* to move towards a spiralling integration and reintegration of that core identity (the Dream). What this entailed for each woman was attention to her intuitive voice, with her body as its messenger. Once the correct medium was found, energy returned rapidly and with it, focus, and an enlarging of her social circles and cultural impact, reinforcing Erikson's observation that "only when active tension is restored, do things fall into place, strongly and simply" (1964, p. 139). To successfully bridge this crisis, and for growth to occur, each of the 10 women also relied on generative caring towards her in the form of encouragement, insights, and involvement from knowledgeable individuals in the area each was pursuing. Moreover, the successful outcome is neither opportunistic nor individualistic, but psychosocially and socioculturally generative, involving an individual's integrity.

Each woman unhesitatingly named her adolescent Dream, what I regard as a woman's core identity, her Essence of Self. Each readily identified that Self that enabled her courage and resiliency. For a married woman, readily identifying a Self known prior to her marriage is contrary to Erikson's (1968) belief that a young adolescent woman's identity depends on whom she marries, that she ultimately exists through her husband's identity and status. That remains *society's* intention, her social place and face, a cultural-historical reality. Similarly, Gilligan's concern, having interviewed four 27-year-old professional women, that a woman's identity and intimacy is "fused," seems unfounded—at least from the findings of these interviews (1982, p. 159). To the contrary, each woman safeguarded her separate identity, her dream, pursuing interests and activities separate from her husband or children. Whether married or a Catholic Sister, finding herself shut out from what she *really* wanted to do, every one of the 10 women found a way to incorporate the self into community from her early 20s and beyond. Given these lifeworld experiences, perhaps one needs to distinguish between a woman's socioculturally and sociohistorically *constructed* identity, spousal loyalty, and her *interior*, identified Self.

As a part of her community identity, each woman had maintained that internalised sense of Self. Across each woman's life history to the years approaching 50, she had maintained and enlarged that interest, socioculturally encouraged. In every case, as each woman bridged her 50s, she experienced a crisis unlike any she had previously surmounted. Her resiliency, courage, personal strengths and weaknesses, and, above all, her ultimate value, were tested. Unaware, and oblivious of the cultural and psychosocial intention, eight of the 10 women were confronted with "the game." The two exceptions (Emily and Margaret) had identified themselves primarily as nurturers. The remaining eight women were faced with their most difficult life passage and *couldn't understand why*. For these women, subtly at first, then more directly, support systems each had relied upon isolated her, or encouraged her towards becoming what she was not and could not become if to remain psychologically healthy. As Ellen had experienced being cast in old woman roles in opera productions when 44 years old, at issue was the shrinking of their social spaces, the constructing of the Old Woman. A woman's reproductive system (menopause) and her supposed emotional fragility at this time has frequently been socially targetted as the cause.

The reality was a destabilization of each woman's self-worth and with it her self- and social identity, a confrontation between future ego despair or ego integrity, and, if we look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), a crisis of self-actualization—psychological health. The methods used were subtle and various: for some of the women, both genders were involved in the mind-games—in a shrinking of their professional or volunteer profiles (Malen, Sophia, Ellen, Miranda). In Fenebee's case, the Church hierarchy she trusted without warning dismantled her department, ignoring her professional integrity as its head. It devastated her. Emily, Margaret, and Jacqueline, experienced a male family-member's ego loss. For each woman, the resultant anomic crisis evolved her key value and her talent (her adolescent Dream). It required a discovery of a new pathway (new knowledge), reflection and decision-making, and relatively imposed (or chosen) social isolation before meeting new supports outside of her former social circle. She utilised her courage to risk the unknown and ultimate disillusionment of that core value of her Self to safeguard personal and family

integrity. At issue for all 10 women was their authentic voice and affective autonomy; the challenge to continue enlarging their generative skills; and, the determination to remain actively involved within their respective communities on their terms. Until each woman discovered the method most suited to her personality, and the appropriate support system, her physical health and psychological wellbeing worsened.

Conscientizing her Self: the Pressure of Social Power

Earlier in this study I mentioned Erikson's belief that long-range dysfunction or anomie highlights the "defects in the 'fiber' of generations and institutions" (1964, pp. 139-140). In short, dysfunctional institutions are intergenerationally maintained. I used two 19th Century European authors to highlight the two basic choices each of us has. 1) Guyau (1887), recognized that the strength of a society and its social fabric and civility depends upon the developmental strengths and inclusion of individuals. 2) Durkheim's (1897) philosophy is the traditional, autocratic patriarchal society. Succinctly, sociocultural values must be imposed upon an individual to ensure order. And as I said, Durkheim's society, controlled by an unseen, human, corporate hand, imposed solidarity upon the *male*. Durkheim's male, then, unknowingly surrendered his individuality to a group individualism. The adult female posed a problem because outside of this corporate influence. Durkheim recommended using dishonest institutional languaging practices to mold and shape her from inception of adolescence on. Socially engineered into believing "she could choose more freely, [in reality] as her choice would be determined by her aptitudes, it would generally bear on the same sort of occupations" (Durkheim, 1897/1951, p. 384). And, as previously mentioned, the educational testing, streaming, and occupational choices for women of the 1950s bore a marked resemblance to Durkheim's recommendation. In short, a female is institutionally gendered into her sexuality to impose a complementary (lesser) role upon her. Then, in that complementary, economically vulnerable role, if married, conjugal anomie becomes her problem; a male may legitimately blame and project his anxieties onto his wife (Durkheim, 1897/1951).

That the intentionality of one's cultural-historical surrounds scribbles over a female's innate abilities, narrowing most females' developmental potential, has become clear in the readings of these 10 women and in the literature review. Particularly and specifically for the female at the waning of her reproductive value, as at its inception, once again a deliberate construction of a human product by both religious and secular institutions takes place, reinforced by the media. For a woman who assumes she will continue sharing her talents and in turn influence her social spaces, as Jacqueline said, "It wasn't easy. It was very, very difficult." For eight of the 10 women bridging their 50s, their talented and energized Self identity was disturbing the status-quo social spaces they lived within. Their internalised Self identity was at odds with society's intention for an aging woman. Julia wondered, "Will I be like my mother at her age?" For two women, Emily and Margaret, their Dream was not in defiance or at odds with their sociocultural space, nevertheless each was vicariously threatened. Each acted, ultimately enabling growth for all concerned. In the process of supporting and protecting their family unit, they each not only extended their respective knowledge base and leadership skills, but also enlarged their social network and identity.

According to Maslow (1962), self-actualization is simply a healthy psyche. Furthermore, the "psychopathology of evasion, fixation, regression, and defensiveness, or the problem of evil, stands in the way of growth" (Maslow, 1962, p. 164). From pre-adolescence forward, the sociocultural institutions, economically driven, conspire against self-actualizing potentialities for the reasons Durkheim (1897/1951) advocated, adversely affecting the psychological growth potential of both male and female. Each culture has its gender roles. But, as Maslow (1962) believed—and I agree—it is not the sociocultural dictates of molding, shaping, or teaching that create the self-actualized individual, but rather how observing individuals, specifically adults, encourage each and every individual's "innate potentialities and personalities" (p. 160). Each of these 10 women is a healthily strong-minded individual. Yet, as females, they struggled with environmental expectancy demands and pressures from the inception of their young adulthood years forward.

As the literature review indicated (Chap. II), the young female of the 1950s was well indoctrinated into her role as wife, whether as a bride of the Church (male) or wife of a spouse (male). The women elaborated upon their experiences within this role as they unravelled their life histories (chap. IV). Personal decisions made according to personality styles during their early 20s continued, enabling each of the women to defy environmental-growth inhibitors, others' personal dysfunctional crises she was to adopt and adapt towards. From her 20s forward, her developmental growth thwarted, each woman's anomie became the passport to the Essence of her Self.

Personal Tasks

Ten Women's Adolescent Dream and the Years 20-25

I had not anticipated the ongoing impact of initiatives taken by each of the women during these early years. Personal decisions acted upon between the ages of 20 to 25 markedly influenced each woman's future personality development, authentic style, and how tenaciously she guarded her separate self. Those core-value decisive choices of her early 20s were the stabilising force influencing the decisions made as the women bridged their middle adult passage. This separate self guided each woman's direction. It entailed insightfully unravelling her social self (her public identity) back to her central core. It entailed a "whole dying process" as Emily said, "a death and a resurrection," as Iris said, which Margaret artistically portrayed in two large silk-screen Easter banners. It entailed energy, despondency, and varying degrees of depression for some, as each woman focused on her own values, her own inner truth, clarifying life's meaning for her personally. "This is precisely what happens in the honoring of individuality. One discovers what one has been searching to know" (Moustakas, 1995, p. 15).

If one is to use these 10 women as guides, the inception of a woman's young adult years sets the foundation stone in place. During her early to mid-20s, each woman asserted her primary life-core value. Initiative and creativity abounded. Opportunities appeared, were followed,

and energy was at a high level. Each of the women's strengths of character came to the fore when blocked—Miranda, financially unable to attend university towards a high school teaching career, selected an adult education centre and taught adults. The nurturers (Iris, Margaret and Emily) concentrated on their children and husband's ego development, music and volunteer work developing their separate community identity. Malen, blocked from continuing her nursing career, quietly focused on her piano. Once her children arrived, she (as did Emily), substituted organ playing while concentrating on child and community activities, developing a social profile and skills in tennis, "a different community," as Emily said, "from the family and religious one" Jacqueline created her niche in the music world, internalising her identity as a professional singer, a role she has never abandoned—simply generating her children's talents in the interim years. Ellen attended university and achieved her goal academically, while keenly observing the elegance and inner poise of the more socially fortunate, affluent student, noticing and modelling "what money could not buy" (one's personality style). Sophia, finding she was to teach, creatively turned a crisis of voice into an independent voice statement, curriculum development. Her inner drive forged her spiritual pathway from that decision on. Fenebee diversified her artistic talents, and began her BFA to make a situation more tolerable while simultaneously educating her Community. Julia accomplished her goal (her music diploma) despite obstacles—her husband's busy career involvement, her music students, housework, teaching, and mothering.

Five of the women, Sophia, Julia, Jacqueline, Miranda and Ellen determinedly focused their lives towards accomplishing their dream. Jacqueline left her secretarial job, living on a subsistence wage as she completed her Conservatory courses. Her determination resulted in a professional singing career, a "good living," and an internalised life-long sense of Self as a professional singer. Ellen had simply "never felt like an artist," even though she knew her mother wished it. She refused to accommodate yet another generation into what she foresaw as probable poverty. One senses that her driving force was to educate herself away from her history, to create her identity by recreating her reality. Julia achieved her dream. Her strength of character, resiliency, initiative and perseverance broke through every seemingly

impossible obstacle and barrier—minimal piano instruction as a child, entering the Conservatorium with minimal theoretical background to facilitate success, a silenced mother and an uncooperative father. Miranda opened her fabric shop and became sole owner of her three passions, fabric, her independent Self, and her identity as a successful teacher and business woman. Throughout each of their lives, the obstacles have not stopped, but all continue to surmount them towards *their* intended community direction. As Malen voiced, perhaps for all 10 women, "I have done as much as I can to develop my potential and achieve my ambitions without being totally selfish." The struggle crossing that bridge into the middle years engages one's Self in the ethic of caring in order to overcome the obstacles socioculturally maintained to deny that Self. For once again, as in adolescence, a female is expected to become self-aware rather than Self aware, or to mirror society's expectations rather than to listen to her own inner direction, her intuitive, authentic voice, and focus her Dream.

Middle Life Social Spaces and Identity

Several of the women, mentally sabotaged previously, kept their counsel as they embarked on a new project. Julia, for example, had initially asked her husband's permission. A course, The History of Women in Education, and a psychology course raised her awareness beyond thinking "everything [she] did had to be checked with someone else." For some, it took at times an extraordinary amount of focus (Iris, Emily, Malen, Julia, Jacqueline). Growth and independence of one's social self initially may cost dearly as Iris and Julia learned. Miranda, divorcing her husband when 30 years old, although difficult both socially and religiously, had had youth on her side. For the two women in their 50s, not only was their decision more financially and socially vulnerable, but each woman had been married more than 25 years and had grown children. Lacking spousal loyalty and friendship, her youth behind her, in divorcing their husbands, Julia and Iris courageously chose an unknown, potentially economically vulnerable future given the then inception of globalization and downsizing. Surviving the trauma, both women have uncovered additional inner strengths and dormant talents. In their early 50s, and personally thriving, Ellen's social Belongingness need was

7

threatened, as was Sophia's authentic voice, and Fenebee's Community identity and respect. Miranda's "loss of courage" in choosing partners rather than selling the shop and risking the unknown brought unanticipated complications and challenges in her life before she took the action she did. For a period of approximately 7 years, the women tested their personal mettle and their resiliency. Friendships were tested, children's loyalties were challenged, social stigmatization was feared, and, at times, isolation experienced.

Looking at the 10 women's life histories, "the easy way out," as Malen commented, reappears in a more complicated form until resolved wisely. Each woman has taken charge of her life to retain or regain her Essence of Self rather than the pseudo-self Western culture likely prefers she model at her age.

While Erikson referred to a "woman's preparation for care [as] anchored more decisively in her body," he did not confine her biologically (Erikson, 1964, p. 132). Family care, which one presupposes to include children's activities, required "the joint guarantee" of each parent (p. 132). Further, should a male consider generativity as *his* exclusive self-development in work, profession, and community landmarks, Erikson (1964) wrote emphatically: "Generativity, as selfless 'caring,' refer(s) to man's *love for his works and ideas as well as for his children*" [emphasis added] (p. 131). Gender neutral, love (relationship) and work (society) is community. To the degree gender separation (*his* works and ideas, *her* relationship and attachment activities) validates a male's "power," to that degree a female and her social spaces are devalued. Ageism, menopause, and the empty nest syndrome (for mothers of grown children) are conveniently constructed, socially dysfunctional myths.

Patriarchy biases towards a male-favored perspective, coloring perceptions, interpretations, and reinforcing ideologies. In a patriarchal society, males are subtly indoctrinated to view from one perspective (his), females from two (theirs, and his is given the higher value), "there seems to be a line of development missing from current depictions of adult

development, a failure to describe the progression of relationships toward a maturity of interdependence" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 155). The challenge for women entering their middle years becomes one of self-determination against institutionally induced ageism. When a woman determines her personal interdependence among self, personal and social relationships, she lives the Eriksonian generativity of love and work, and the praxis of Gilligan's ethic of care. Unfortunately, eight of the 10 women experienced ageism.

The Pressure of Social Power: the Purpose and Plan of Ageism

An adult man needs to be needed, so—for the strength of his ego and for that of his community—he requires the challenge emanating from what he has generated and from what now must be "brought up," guarded, preserved—and eventually transcended. (Erikson, 1964, p. 131)

To construct the Old Woman, ageism is intentional, considered politically and economically expedient, even politically and religiously "correct," and is pre-planned female obsolescence. It is psychologically debilitating. It is psychosocial pathology. Jacqueline and Malen experienced it within their known community, Jacqueline explaining it this way: "I was to retire. My children were all grown, I was to entertain, go to parties and agree with everybody, even politically. I was to support the community."

Three women experienced ageism overtly. Each had largely concentrated her expertise in her religious institution. Sophia, thriving in her interim leadership position, was given a position with an empty title, from "a woman supervisor who didn't seem to know what to do with me," and little to do when the former director returned and resumed his duties. Ellen was busied in her church work to the point of collapse and devalued as a "go-fer" and a "joe-jobber," the minister mentioning an elderly female congregational member as "a welfare case in a mink-coat." Fenebee lost her professional profile, her confidence, and perceived community value when the Media Department she headed was unexpectedly phased out.

But Miranda intuited the intent. Nearing her 50th birthday, she was at first surprised, then

became annoyed enough to exclaim: "A birthday is *not* a grieving, you know!"

Ageism and the Social Self

These examples reveal how a woman's psychological dysfunction may be imposed upon her by a dysfunctionally constructed society. Approaching the bridge to Middle Adulthood, one's culture becomes most subtle in deconstructing a woman's social identity and activities towards constructing her as Old Woman. For example, Julia, successful in her every endeavour, high in initiative and tenacity, explained her leadership rejection in this way. "I lack good communication skills. I wasn't the image they were looking for. I don't come across as a person who can control people. They did not want a visionary." Gilligan (1982) noticed an absence of women speaking about their experiences. However, as we have seen, if a woman persists in heeding her body and her affect, in listening to the authentic and intuitive voice of her logical mind, she meets a supportive network. Julia, initially perceiving herself as inadequate, left her permanent teaching position to challenge her perceived lack of leadership and, in process, exemplified the visionary leader. As with each other woman, she heeded her own voice of integrity.

Woman's personal challenge, therefore, becomes one of continuing autonomy, interdependence of voice, a widening intimacy in a generative spirit, and personal-social identity/integrity. While each of the 10 women in this study may at times risk being viewed as attitudinally accommodating, a closer view of her activities highlights a refusal to compromise personal integrity once that social intention becomes clear. How did the women rise to the challenge? What were some resources utilised?

Women's Wisdom Journey: Centering the Self

Middle Adulthood Voice, Identity, and Social Spaces

I'd like to turn the clock back to my 44th year," said Miranda during her interview, at age 47. "I can see that if one does not do what one feels strongly about in the mid-40s, making bad mistakes, judgments, decisions, it's almost self-destructive."

The direction a woman takes during her 40s is crucial. Even more so, is *how* she continues and crosses the bridge into her middle adulthood years, the bridge into her 50s. While crossing this bridge, Jacqueline began teaching voice. Against her husband's better judgment, she moved beyond her home studio into a college setting, her professional expertise and reputation continuing to receive widening recognition. Malen refused to take her medication for diagnosed depression and instead sought alternate therapeutic forms led by female therapists that enabled the completion of her music-teaching diploma, the enlarging of her student body and music-community involvements. Using initiative, not manipulation, Julia completed her MEd, visited a number of countries specifically to hear about *The Future of Education*, became disillusioned with what that meant in reality, and began her doctorate, focusing specifically on the music component and its teachers being displaced. She began an unforeseen process that has enlarged her educational voice throughout her Australian State within all classrooms. Emily, honoring her marriage and family, sought knowledge and became involved in a crisis line following her husband's unanticipated job termination and subsequent severe depression. Miranda, a partnership leaving her with "one little spot" in her fabric shop and her identity and psychological health threatened, initiated, and won, a court case and again became its sole owner. Iris entered university, left an abusive marriage and completed her BSW towards a career in spousal-violence counselling. Margaret assisted a son through his crisis, resumed her art as instrumental in her successfully overcoming her depression, and became a leader in her community. Ellen, designing stained-glass windows, began her spiritual journey and diversified her talents.

Sophia and Fenebee each continued their journey of exploration beyond Church dogma into personal spiritual growth. Sophia viewing "education as liberation," discovered her talent for creative, innovative administration, completed her PhD, and moved beyond an imposed crisis of exclusion into post-graduate lecturing, extending her expertise even further into the community. Her department dismantled, Fenebee moved out of a period of despondency to concentrate her artistic talents on architectural design and completion of a lake house, while

at both the practical and relationship level caregiving elderly Sisters.

Discovering one's individual pathway towards turning a thwarting of development into generative psychological health may prove challenging. In Chapter IV, we read how each woman moved beyond possible stagnation, despite a crisis or closure of opportunity, and continued contributing generatively in areas of her choice. What can be learned from a composite of these women's experiences?

The Self in Relationship

Restorative Power

What we have seen in these women's stories is their restorative power in dealing with life's obstacles or life's losses. Ten women's lives unfold as a process resulting from negative events externally imposed. Across lives, these involved spousal betrayal, ageism, corporate "ethics," and spousal and family loyalty, the *ethic* of justice (a sense of fairness), and an independent spiritual voice. Their initiative, individual determination, courage, and resiliency has placed each woman at a point where she, through her life experiences, is an example of what one can do with a supposedly "ordinary" life. *Personally*, her age is not an issue, a dynamic and respectful inclusion in social spaces is.

Ego Integrity Maintained

Quietly focusing and determining their own solution, the women remained people oriented and involved. Each woman confronted the crisis, applying an *information processing systems approach* (Macnab, 1989). Having identified her basic anxiety, she creatively reshaped her problem and discerned what she needed to do in order to effect growth for herself and those closely affected by her actions and activities. By shifting her mindset, within a *process* of change she enhanced her self-awareness and restored her self-confidence. As pathfinders and role-models, Emily's and Jacqueline's behaviour, for example, elicited positive implications for their respective spouses, for their adolescent

children, extended families, and larger community. Recognizing a personal crisis and threat to their psychological health and integrity, Sophia and Julia each took "time at the ocean alone," reached a decision, returned and took charge, each enlarging her community influence across generations and diverse cultures. Malen and Jacqueline, their internalised psychosocial identity and their sociocultural identity at odds, once again selected music as their challenge to reinforce their autonomy. As Malen said, "When I went to TAFE, I really stood up for what I wanted to do, instead of what I was expected to do. I realise now I was finding myself." Margaret, Fenebee, and Ellen withdrew for a time to gain a perspective and a direction, retreating into their respective "inner well" as Ellen terms it. Emily and Miranda, finding themselves in unfamiliar territory, followed a more cerebral pathway, reading selectively, seeking professional classroom or clinical guidance.

Unfolding the Process

At least for the women interviewed, to successfully individuate at middle life, each followed a personally and socially challenging direction that gradually enlarged her focus and opportunities. Ellen's volunteer projects were her "red badge of courage, her own identity." Julia challenged her internalised and perceived problem of "low self-esteem, of feeling dumb and incapable of achieving" by successfully completing a Masters' degree and beginning a doctoral program at the most prestigious university in her State. Emily "found within [herself] something she could draw on" as she successfully assisted her husband out of his depression, strengthening her family unit and enlarging her nurturing contribution into the community as a volunteer for a crisis line. Sophia connected the energy (or loss) of her own voice not only as the gauge of her personal integrity but also to the spiritual integrity of her Church. She diversified her knowledge-base, adopted "education is liberation" as her mandate, and continues on her spiritual quest towards the hidden soul of the female within a patriarchally-bound institution. Each woman in the process of working on a selected activity, discovered that, somewhat surprisingly, she had woven a pattern to her energy source. It was inchoate, unknowingly moving her towards her embryonic kernel of truth beyond the challenge undertaken. It was a journey into the intuitively known. The challenge

involved overcoming an internalised incompetency, whether intellectual in focus, artistically challenging, or initially professionally isolating. For a number of the women, it involved discovering that perhaps what one assumed and valued most highly about one's self had been devalued and exploited by the institutions one most trusted. It was a personal journey into conscientizing—invariably a personally painful as well as a potentially isolating experience. For some of the women, their actions initially puzzled or threatened lifelong acquaintances, family, and friends; some challenged the status-quo values; for some, faith practice became faith praxis. It involved personal integrity, personal wisdom, and for those married, ultimately tested the loyalty and honour of their spouses.

Challenge in Choice

Each woman risked personal vulnerability and isolation as she defined her public social spaces and profile. One also observed a woman's possible struggle throughout life to maintain a separate self within a "couple's" sociocultural mores, conservative religious values, sociopolitical and socioeconomic conservative values, and work ethic. Choosing self-actualization required, for a number of the women, accessing by trial and error a theory-based but non-traditional female-led therapy (perhaps tactile, perhaps intellectual, perhaps artistic). It was this route that led Iris towards discovering a personally acknowledged social identity rather than seeing herself (and being regarded as) dependent upon her husband's. Entering their middle adulthood, these women were seeking to become—or determined to continue as—a "self-actualized person [who] is spontaneous, intrinsically motivated, [and] wants to develop what is unique about oneself" (Maslow, 1954, p. 183). In each case, her inner identity, that original Dream, was threatened and challenged.

Middle Life Transitional Crisis: Biology and Body

"Everybody's starting to say that 50 is old age," said Miranda, approaching her 50th birthday, "I never, ever thought it would be an issue." Only one of the 10 women (Jacqueline) mentioned menopause as a possible cause of her anxiety. But that was in

retrospect. A professional musician/friend was insistent that she move beyond her family and use her expertise for developing musicianship in a wider circle.

I kept saying, 'I'm too old to do this, I'm too old, I can't.' I think hormones have a great deal to do with this, because it wasn't until I had been through the change or even into it that I had the strength to do it, to do what I thought was important. To get out there and share what I'd learnt, to give myself credit. (Jacqueline, in interview)

In reality, as we talked, Jacqueline's diffidence at the time was not age-relevant hormonal imbalance, but rather sociohistorical community pressures and expectations, and loyalty, as "community pressure and expectations were *always* there, and they were important to my husband." Tenacity, isolation, risk, and courage are involved in that interim period as one determines one's future—as these women show. As well, a woman's renewed vibrancy as her social spaces open possibly raises another's personal discomfort level, perhaps even envy. In any event, for a number of the women in this study, *community* anxiety over their audacity to thrive as she bridged her fifth decade seemed more a concern of, and for, the status quo.

The intentionality of confining and defining their social spaces and activities as the women entered their 50th year were unanticipated. But one's dignity and personal integrity is involved. As Jacqueline said, "Talk about wisdom when you can *see* where you've been. But when I was living it, boy, I was confused. City versus country and my *art* versus farm work." For two women, their anomie, choices, and growth were triggered by their husband's socioeconomic crisis of identity brought on in the initial corporate-government downturn of the 1980s.

The Significance of Female Body as Voice at Middle Adulthood

One of these women's tasks was to heed her body's physical voice. Malen's body warned her. Beginning her Music Diploma studies, she "didn't know how to cope with the assignments." Except for her children, "Everybody else was saying, 'Malen, why do you

have to go back to school? It's ridiculous.' I seemed to be in a very vulnerable position and my body reacted accordingly." Understandably, her vitality plunged. She developed back, heart, and reproductive problems. A hysterectomy did not help. What did was accessing affective support together with a therapeutic-touch technique from new sources that identified her energy and negative trigger points. She used her body's energy level to guide her return to her Essence of Self. Physical problems lessened relatively quickly once she rediscovered her growth direction, which for her required a combination of intellect (formal studies, although she struggled with them) and affect (her music). Each woman's key to revitalization was validating her own voice, her body's energy level the indicator.

Sourcing one's energy core. When one challenges the sociocultural impediment to one's middle life growth, the difficulty at times is to find that access route to one's voice and one's energy core. It involved, for these women, accessing their underdeveloped talent or value in service of their prime identity, their Dream. In some cases, for example, Julia, Iris, and Emily, their intellect was engaged. In Margaret's case, her lesser-developed, aesthetic voice was called upon. Jacqueline and Malen engaged a combination of the intellect and aesthetic voice. Sophia engaged her spirituality. For some, the thwarting of their growth needs (Ellen's belongingness, Fenebee's artistic/leadership profile, Miranda's business identity) caused their bodies' negative reactions. In Ellen's case, for example, this culminated in a debilitating long-term stress disease. She relied on prescription drugs for a time, then as creatively concrete simple pursuits such as crocheting, needlepoint, and gardening restored some of her former vitality and confidence, natural medication replaced the chemical. Creating with their hands has been the access route back to groundedness, energy restoration and re-centering for Miranda, Fenebee, and Margaret as well.

Listening to one's intuitive self. Heeding one's own voice—the inner voice—leads one to authentic identity. This identity lies in the centre of one's Self (the Essence of a Self), not in the external searching and recognizable social trappings Erikson (1978) so aptly described in his analysis of Dr. Borg in Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*. This inner voice is also

one's energy centre and intuitive force. Jacqueline's portfolio of her musical experiences, an "album of all the steps" from her single years on, for example, revealed "a *fantastic* six years" prior to her marriage. This review set her future direction.

During her young adulthood years, to the time of her early 40s, Jacqueline's voice was dispersed. Although she kept singing during the years her children were born through the foundational years of their adolescence, she "was confused." As she termed it, it was "city versus country and my *art* versus farm work." Unlike a male's continuation and building upon his Dream—the Essence of himself—hers was dispersed among children and their activities, her husband and his wellbeing, and, together, as a family, their community profile. Only when she entered her 40s did Jacqueline resume greater concentration on herself. For her ultimate success, this required the persistence of a musically-accomplished friend with connections who renewed her "feeling" towards her singing, "making me see my talents." She gave herself permission to validate "two worlds," her own, and her family's. She now included herself as having equal value, worthy of self-care and self-enhancement.

Each of the women in her way has emphasized the essential ingredient for a healthy psyche. For psychological wellness and wellbeing (not only of self but community, culture, and globally) one needs an honest relationship with one's Self. That is impossible outside of community, irrespective of size. It is *reciprocity* of personal worth and value that is the process enabler—gender neutral. Ellen's volunteer work was her "own identity. [She] took on a work identity in volunteer Christian-religious work much in the way a man takes on the identity of the work that he does." Iris's volunteer work was her "umbilical cord to new learning." Her volunteer work—resulting from her own experience—involved women experiencing spousal violence, and the women who assist in retrieving that lost Self and trivialised self-value. Personally experiencing the psychologically and spiritually evolving woman who trusts, values, and validates her female friendships, Iris is "starting to have more and more self-esteem—seeing the value in being [her] own best friend."

Environmental Relationship Impact on a Woman's Development

For growth to continue, some segment of the social context encourages, invites, accepts, and enhances. For a number of the women required to risk success and/or failure to exercise the integrity that is leadership, this involved a newly acquired, independent-of-spouse, supportive gender-neutral network that matched their growth needs. Without a *predominantly female professional, mentoring, friendship, networking response* within a segment of society to facilitate maximising their potential, they could not have succeeded, and family units and the affiliative relationships involved would have disintegrated or been deprived.

Female Life-Stage Development: the Role of Mentors in Personally and/or Professionally Staying Connected or Reconnecting

Several of the women named a significant pre-adult moment that motivated their future. Julia's guiding star, for example, has continued to be two early-adolescent experiences—one engaging her creative talent, the other her will, drive, and initiative. An entrant in an Eisteddfod, she "suddenly became envious of anyone else who also wanted to play music. . . . I heard them playing and I thought, 'No, they don't feel as close to music as I do anyway so it doesn't matter.'" A male teacher provided the challenge: "You can be whatever you like in your life. It's up to you. If you work for something you want to be, you can be it." Apart from "one or two male figures" during her childhood and early adolescence, Malen's mentors and role models continue to be women "involved in music, teaching, performing, and composing," her first piano teacher's words echoing in her ears, "Don't say no, you'll never be asked again," as she continues to share her talents with an intergenerational community. Entering adulthood, Iris, Jacqueline, and Ellen's receiving a male music professor's encouragement and support assisted their intrinsic ego identification and life-long artistic involvements.

Approaching her 50th year, as each woman focused on Self-generativity, mentors, primarily women, provided encouragement, assistance, and opportunities in locating the essential

background knowledge (intellectual, aesthetic, and application). Malen, Jacqueline, Margaret and Iris, are each indebted to a woman of similar age who facilitated their journey into middle adulthood. Personally significant authors provided Emily and Miranda with another source. A number named the lasting influence of a female professional therapist. Emily, who "learns a lot through reading and talking with people," recalled an elderly female neighbor as "so wise," and the admiration and respect she felt towards the Grapevine crisis-line therapist/facilitator where she volunteered her services. Only one of the 10 women (Ellen) was initially assisted by a male. Her church minister confidently appointed her to a profile position. By telling her "there was no way [she] wasn't going to do a good job," he provided the context where she diversified her dormant talents. Diverse resources—retreats, readings, spiritually-oriented workshops, and like-minded soul-journeymen continue to assist Sophia and Fenebee.

The Reciprocity Role of Friendship

As Maslow found when researching the self-actualizing person, these women have a few highly-valued close friends and a wider circle of acquaintances. While Iris, for example, "used professional counsellors," she has also "healed on another level among friends who listen." For her, it was among women friends that she learned to like and value herself again, to trust her judgment. "The deepest level of friendship" for Emily are those "half-dozen friends [she] feels totally comfortable with."

For these women, rather than networking "sisters," it is more a mutual friendship mentoring. Malen's reflexology friend connected her with a woman and therapeutic method that ultimately turned her around. While these friends may have the connections, more importantly, they have faith in her abilities. There is a comfort level, a trust, a *sharing* of thoughts, feelings and vulnerabilities. These friends form a small nucleus, an inner circle, a soul-enhancing space.

Mothers

Many of the women's mothers had obviously assisted in providing the psychic capital that enabled their daughter's courage and strength of purpose from adolescence on. In some instances, it was a mother who provided the impetus to develop and use initiative. During her childhood and adolescence, Malen's mother facilitated not only her present musical involvement, but it was she who arranged and enabled a nursing career when Malen's father vetoed her return to high school. Her mother's action and support resulted in Malen's sense of intellectual capability, personal dignity, and accomplishment that provided later tenacity when obstacles appeared thwarting the TAFE Music Diploma. As her mother had taken charge, so Malen modeled, saying to her adolescent children in turn, "opportunities will not arise, you have to make them happen." Iris's spiritual depth can be encapsulated in her mother's advice to "be a noble woman" when facing adversity. As "a woman of wisdom, courage and love," she is one of her role models. Miranda's mother acted both as her support and mind adversary as she overcame obstacles towards her career as a businesswoman.

Not one woman suggested her mother envied her youth or wished to impede her dream. Miranda's mother "moved over," enabling her daughter's Dream fulfillment that had been denied her. Early widowed, she possibly enabled Miranda's independence, initiative, and resiliency by successfully managing a farm and keeping a family intact. Julia's mother "was sympathetic" towards her daughter's love of music, even though she "couldn't change the situation." Sophia's stepmother excepted, it appears that while a daughter's decision may not have been fully understood, nevertheless it was respected. This flies in the face of American contemporary research that mothers rival and daughters blame (Cocola & Matthews, 1992; Friday, 1977; Steinem, 1992). Rather, one observes mutual respect and compassionate caring that transfers in a mother's later years to a daughter's reciprocity in caregiving. Margaret, noticing the loneliness, began "a senior ladies' group in [her] mother's home." Jacqueline's and Malen's mothers-in-laws' sense of place and concern for their sons propelled a daughter-in-law into personal growth, inadvertently moving each beyond possible depression and certainly resentment. Jacqueline, once financially more self-

sufficient, creatively arranged her teaching schedule, and visits her mother in her home city one week per month.

Of mothers still living, perhaps this earlier understanding and acknowledgment of a daughter's independent spirit, autonomy and integrity is shown in the mutual friendship, ease of communication, and support a daughter now gives her aging mother. Julia teaches her private students in her mother's home, thus including her mother in her interests, successes, young peoples' aspirations and value identification. Malen, recognizing her error of judgment when her mother was blocked developmentally while crossing her bridge into middle adulthood, rather than becoming shame driven, became instead growth motivated, grew beyond that experience, and is generatively recognizing her mother's influence upon her present musical goal achievements.

Husbands and Children

Husbands' support and enthusiasm for their wives' newfound focus varied. At one end of the spectrum there was active and/or passive aggression, at the other, cooperation and gratefulness. This was not so with the grown children. Whether sons or daughters they were, and remain, the cheerleaders.

Sharing One's Leadership Potential

All but one of the women had had experience in leadership as well as loyalty to a group leader during adolescence and young adulthood. They had experienced inclusion, empathy, and respect within a diversified and supportive environment, developing their social skills and confidence. This was the resource that enabled the resiliency and strengths and identified the area to assist growth when confronting and surmounting a personal, socioculturally imposed crisis at the inception of their middle years.

Is there a connecting link between early leadership and, in turn, taking direction and the

relative absence of manipulative strategies among these ten women? There seemed to be a focus and an absorption, for example, on enhancing others' potential gifts together with their own. For instance, although Julia wrote a 50-page interview-based report and submitted it to the Education Department, and Jacqueline took on an administrative position as head of her Music Department, neither appears to have contrived or planned a political strategy. It is somewhat akin to Margaret's comment about her community leadership: "Somebody had to do it." The wellbeing of the whole seemed the concern, an intrinsic process, rather than self-advancement and self-gain, even though, ultimately, in each case that became the eventuality.

Spiritual Development

Possibly one of the most difficult challenges for the woman in this study who spoke of God and her faith as the cornerstone of her values, has been her initial conscientizing beyond her religious training. Fenebee's artistic talent, for example, is not only the source of her energy and joy in life, but appears to be the route to her spiritual core of Self. The sublimation of that Self, the "submerging of her artistic talents and interests," negatively effects her physical health and energy level.

One's unique personality, personal integrity, an authentic voice and religious-spiritual praxis intertwine. Sophia, as a "feminist theologian" no longer can ignore her disquiet over the absence of the feminine voice in religious teachings and ritual. She is on a "spiritual journey," well aware of the risk to her psychosocial integrity, possibly experiencing psychospiritual anxiety. Iris's emerging spirituality, too, is controversial. Feeling betrayed, she defies. She is "not one of God's burnt cookies." She is "breaking out of her eggshell," drawing on her mother's spirituality, and seeing "a very close comparison between the teachings of Christ and the basic principles of feminism." Miranda, at 30 years of age, had controversially and courageously embarked on her personal spiritual journey when her "church didn't know what to do" with her divorce and economic independence. She risked family, social, and religious isolation, and as with each woman's spiritual journey, "it was

very, very difficult." Yet she, too, had "a strong inner conviction; [she] *knew* what she was doing was right." She was required to discover for herself relationships, gender issues, and her spiritual depths.

Malen's authentic self, "the me that God wants to use," has been her "conscious goal." Experiencing psychic suffocation within her religious community's gendered female role for women, she "*knew* the key for her lay in the search for the peace that passeth all understanding." In recovering her body's voice through the therapeutic touch of Edu-K, Malen accessed her serenity, her intellectual and aesthetic capabilities and imagination, metaphor and body. Law and Gospel now balance, and Malen has moved beyond "the repression" of her personality, talents, and self-punishment. It required a disciplined concentration on her Self, and the recognition that a female's Self development largely negates the inhibitory selfish label.

Emily's "spiritual part has been the absolute rock" throughout her life, although "it was very buried for a while." For her, too, a process of discernment was required. From her girlhood memory of God "recording all the things Emily did wrong in his little Book," through family crises, "taking it one day at a time, prayerfully, noting each little success," to "looking forward to what God has in store for me in the future," Emily's experience of God over the years "has changed." Attending to her personal soul journey has set her on her wisdom path. Margaret's experiences in some respects are similar. On the other hand, Julia, experiencing life's finiteness in personally significant areas (her divorce, closest girlfriend's death, pedagogical closure), has "gone back to the church to look at spirituality," as a part of her life review. Not surprisingly, she has chosen the Cathedral. The intricate symbolism and affective richness within each stained-glass window, the music, the ritualised pageantry, the rich text, no doubt appeals to her imaginative, metaphoric mind. She absorbs the artistic traditional richness, while Ellen and Margaret researched, interpreted, and artistically constructed their evolving spiritual maturity.

Without discarding the key and core concepts, then, each is journeying beyond religious dogma and doctrine (a human construct) toward a contemplative interpretation that incorporates an indwelling, research, reflection, a critical appraisal, and a decision. One could go so far as to say that by taking personal responsibility for her soulfulness, she is moving towards "dwelling poetically upon the earth . . . beyond a mechanistic viewpoint," as we learnt from Kugelman earlier in Chapter III. Women's spirituality engages an authentic voice (body), an integrity (mind), and energy (affect) back to the Essence of her Self. What eventuates is a groundedness, and a strong sense of a Self.

Wisdom

Wisdom is being acquired in self-disciplined growth through participatory action. Each woman recognized with gratitude the significant individuals who enabled her out of a life-stage socially induced crisis—individuals who encouraged, modelled, and opened pathways from her adolescent years forward. Whether married, divorced, or committed to a life of a Religious, the generativity shown them during adolescence and young adulthood is being recycled not only in the lives of their immediate families, where applicable in the renewal of confidence and outreach of respective spouses, but also is influencing others' potential or interests. These women in the main experienced unconditional positive regard and empathy from a valued individual as they developed their innate interests during their formative years.

Entering her middle adulthood, by successfully bridging a crisis of opportunity and an attempt to foreclose an identity within her known social spaces, each woman has reinstated the ethic of caring, thus encouraging self-actualization—in some cases across four generations of family and in every instance spilling over into ever-widening social circles.

For,

As we share our highest potential, we find that it is necessarily actualized in the social and interpersonal context—in the I/Thou relationship where genuine dialogue, coexistence, expectancy and love are the highest expression of hope and human behaviour." (Macnab, 1989, p. 245)

To return to the composites of one's individuality and authenticity, that "strapping plant of childhood" (Iris), to retain "one's strong will" and initiative (Malen), one's known Self and generative purpose (Jacqueline, Julia, Sophia), one's faith in God and the outcome (Margaret, Emily), one's socially valued identity (Miranda, Ellen, Fenebee), significant mentors or enablers encouraged, advised, opened academic/aesthetic doors, and generally expanded their opportunities and developmental potential. Each woman simultaneously challenged herself intellectually in her chosen interest field, thus enabling her future direction and opening further options both within herself in an additional knowledge base, an awareness of cultural contexts, and a sharing of ideas, interests, and experiences.

Wisdom in Joy and Contentment

The women are determined to self-actualize. For all 10 women, that Essence of Self has become clear, although the outcome for Fenebee and Miranda is still in process. The Self can be recognized in the energy, enthusiasm, joy and contentment, not only in living and anticipating the future but in everyday routine. Jacqueline, an accomplished singer, performer and teacher, spoke of that joy and contentment in her way: "One can *not* but sing if that is *a part of one's self*. Now I know where I'm going." Margaret, whose nurturing skills and religious faith were tested in her young-adult son's devastating accident, career loss, and subsequent crisis of identity, nurtured her aesthetic side, her artistic interest, and spoke of the joy of her contentment in this way: "I've really come out of my shell. I am just an ordinary person, but *the community has certainly welcomed my involvement*. Life is actually bubbling right along." Julia, an accomplished educator, piano teacher, curriculum writer, and published scholar, accesses the process for each of us to follow: "Musicians always feel inadequate as there are such great heights to reach. It keeps one humble. As far as I am concerned, *one has lost the plot if one ever reaches the stage of knowing it all*." And Sophia gave the key: "*being strong in my voice*"—this voice of one's psyche: mind, affect, and body's physiognomic knowing.

Each spoke in her way for all 10 women. The process involves relationships, responsibility

and responsiveness in developing one's talents, and a recognition that the art of life lies in continuing to unfold one's Self into deeper layers of meaning if one but listens, discerns and acts, trusting the process will unfold as intended. Possibly, cultural-historical practices may initially impede this process. Malen explained it this way:

I had to learn not to punish myself when I wasn't responsible, to refuse to wear what wasn't mine. I have endeavoured to develop my potential and achieve my ambitions without being totally selfish. As you can see, a hobby became a way of life because my mother facilitated my interest in music. She insisted I practice and gave me all the encouragement during my childhood and adolescence. It was an unconscious movement into the school(s) when my children started school, but I was convinced that those children needed that opportunity. These stepping stones evolved. Not conscious of setting that goal, I am there! I am teaching.

It is intergenerationally not only generative, but regenerative of all involved. Given their composite lifeworld experiences, perhaps one needs to distinguish between a woman's cultural-historically constructed role identity and her individually unique inner Essence of Self. What *is* the Essence of my Self? then becomes the key question for any woman undertaking a life review as she bridges her middle years into middle adulthood. Defining that Self is the key to continuing self-actualization, not only of one's own, but of one's social world.

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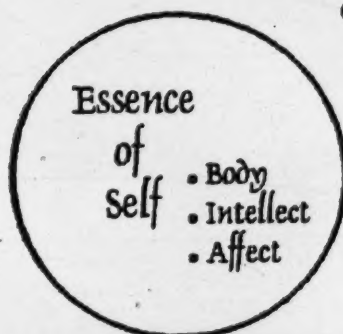
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Appendix A - CONCEPTUALIZATION

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■ Childhood:

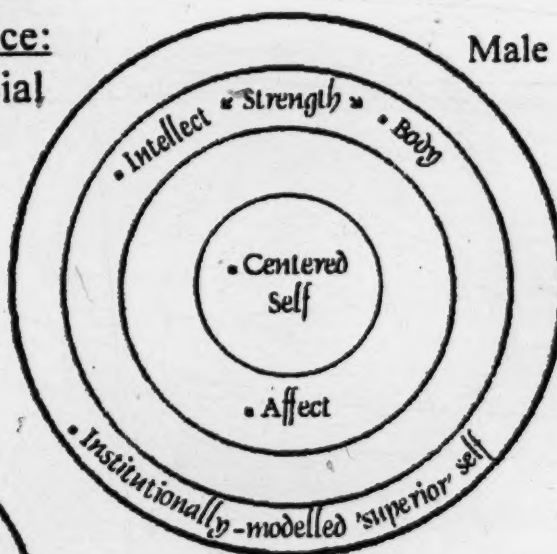
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Female



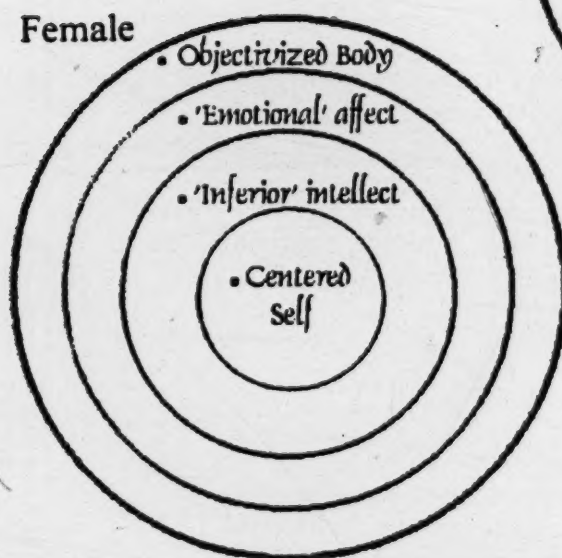
■ Pre-adolescence & Adolescence:

The inter- intra-psychosocial
rite of passage

Male

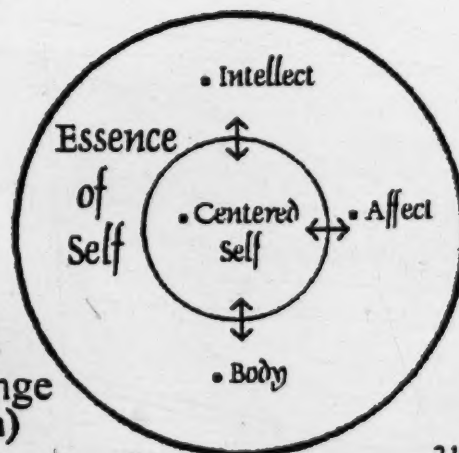


Female



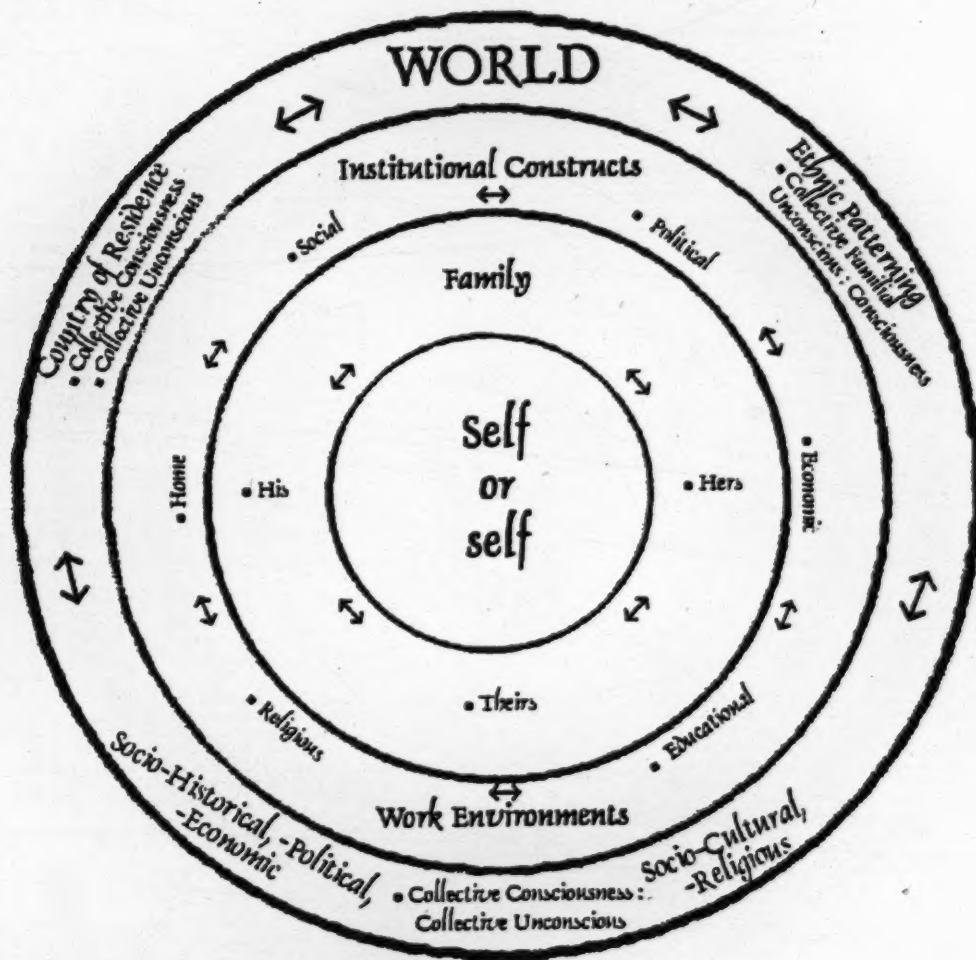
■ Middle Adulthood:

A female's challenge
(conscientization)



■ The 'World' context: an individual's psychosocial identity

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■ The medium is language use



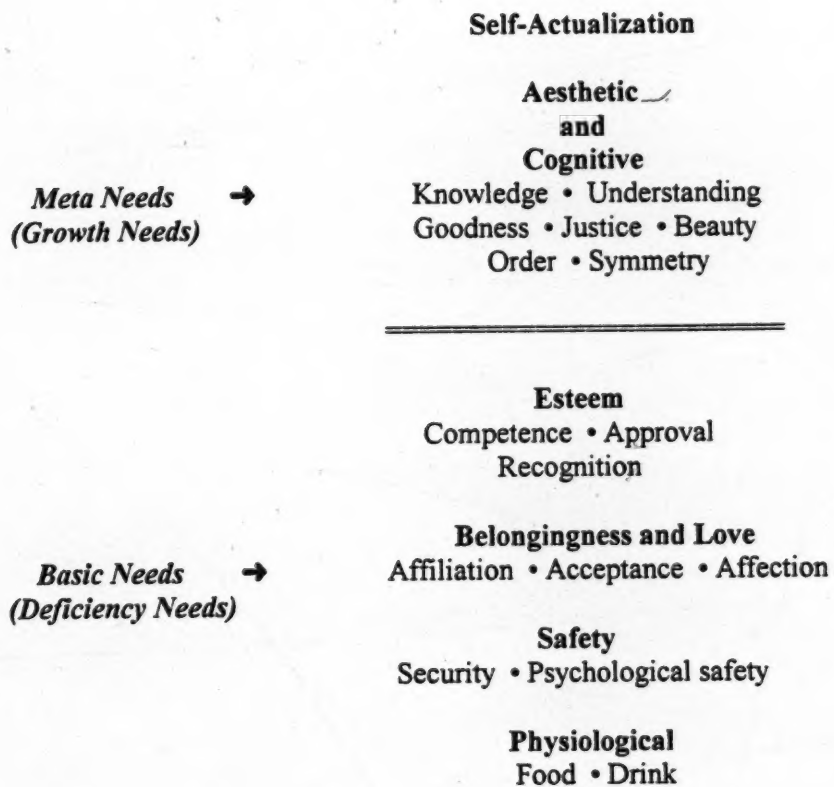
Appendix B

Erikson's (1953) Eight Stages of Development and Their Associated Crises and Virtues

Circa	0-1	Infancy	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope
	1-3	Early Childhood	Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt	Will
	4-5	Preschool Age	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose
	6-11	School age	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence
	12-20	Adolescence	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity
	20-24	Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love
	25-64	Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care
	65+	Old Age	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom

Appendix C

Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs



Appendix D

Questions that Guided the Interview Process

1. When you were an adolescent and you were asked the question: "What would you like to do when you leave school," can you recall your answer? As an adolescent can you recall your adult ambition?
2. What *did* you do? Can you recall why?
3. How has your life evolved from your adolescent years to the present?
4. In your own estimation, have you achieved some of your aspirations, ambitions, developed some of your potential?
5. Looking back on your life, and presently, have you had any mentors, role models (even perhaps literary figures, for example)?
6. What are you presently involved in?
7. How do you feel about your life right now?
8. Have you thought about your future direction? How do you see yourself in the future?

Appendix E

Letter of Consent

Dear

I am interested in why some women nearing middle life choose to develop a talent and how they set out to achieve their goal. Briefly, it is from a woman's perspective that this dissertation is being written. The timeframe is woman and man nearing middle life, the ages approximately 45 to 55 years. Women's quest for wisdom is also a part of this research.

I have chosen to focus on women's experiences as, 1) my questions and women's experiences have been less observed in developmental psychology literature and research; 2) to co-research women with similar experiences to my own.

I anticipate that some insights from this research will spark reflection, as well as conversation, among women and men. I therefore very much appreciate your present and ongoing contribution. I will also understand should you wish to withdraw from the research participation at any time during the process.

As I see now, there will be one taped interview, although likely there will be further conversations for clarification. This interview tape and your name will remain confidential. You will receive a transcribed copy of the interview. Should you wish any parts of the interview remain "unpublished," would you mind indicating clearly and returning a copy for my file? To assist anonymity, a pseudonym will replace your given name in the written work.

Signature of Consent

Date

Appendix F

J. Erikson's (1997) Adaptation of the Life Cycle in Old Age

Basic Mistrust vs. Trust	Hope
Shame and Doubt vs. Autonomy	Will
Guilt vs. Initiative	Purpose
Inferiority vs. Industry	Competence
Identity Confusion vs. Identity	Fidelity
Isolation vs. Intimacy	Love
Stagnation vs. Generativity	Care
Despair and Disgust vs. Integrity	Wisdom
Loss in Isolation vs. Old Age and Community	Gero-transcendence

The syntonics support growth and expansion, offer goals, celebrate self-respect and commitment of the very finest. Syntonic qualities sustain us as we are challenged by the more dystonic elements with which life confronts us all. We should recognize the fact that circumstances may place the dystonic in a more dominant position. Old age is inevitably such a circumstance. In writing "The Ninth Stage," I therefore placed the dystonic element first in order to underscore its prominence and potency. In either case, it is important to remember that conflict and tension are sources of growth, strength, and commitment. (Joan Erikson, 1997, pp. 106)

Appendix G



JACQUELINE

Peak Experiences and Transitions

<i>Childhood Adolescence</i>	20-29	30-40	40s	50+
■ 5yrs: Music ■ Adol: choirs solo singer ■ Secretary, but wants to sing. --no parental support --initiative: Singing Diploma Secretary at Con. ■ Conserv. Head support ■ 19 yrs: <i>Identity</i> --Professional Singer, diversified engagements	■ 24: marries. --move to farm out of Province. --Opera Lead --n/a next offer as pregnant. ■ 25-26: --baby --high profile singing engage. --unsuccessful audition ■ 26 approx: Began smoking; "giving up I think. Thought I'd never sing solo again." ■ 29yrs: 2nd child --Concentration on ch's music, farm life role. --Traditional wife role. --local community activities.	■ Singing engagements. --duets --commercials ■ 31: birth of child --farmwork, ch's activities. --very much obeying role code: wife, mother, mother- in-law, community expectations. ■ 35-40: taking ch. to musical classes, etc., --Toured with music group. ■ Mentor/Friend introduces her to singing instructor. --Resumes lessons. --Visiting maestro --Europe, vocal coaching --Conflict: spousal lifestyle. --Stopped smoking: realizes she'd been giving up. Took 5 years.	■ 39-40: Accepts invitation to help in opera chorus. --Small character roles. --Singing lessons, Europe again with the maestro. ■ 40 yrs: realization that "two worlds: family, farm, and then MINE." ■ Considered 'flakey' -- not following the traditions nor 'correct' political party.	■ Menopause: V. Structured expectancies in farm community --hormonal stress? ■ Economic downturn: husb. cuts housing allowance, realizes "if things are to improve I have to do it myself." --first voice st. --advertises self as voice teacher. --Portfolio and letter to several educational centres. --Referral to one: didn't hear back. ■ Feeling of lessening intellectual worth (no degree) --adjudicates singing exams. with partner. ■ Home studio thriving --call from a campus accepts.

JACQUELINE

Impact of Losses on her life

<i>Life Losses</i>	<i>Physic Damage to Self Image</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Aesthetic Medium</i>	<i>Intellect Education Expertise</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>
■ Move out of Province ■ Pregnancy inability to take lead role ■ Failure in audition for next production. ■ Lack of communication in decision-making between husband and self. ■ Husband's traditional role values more impt. than hers. ■ Saying "no" to voice teaching the first time. ■ Gap in her musical career.	■ Value difference betw. her family & husband's: --he: son, responsible. --she: a flakey artist. ■ Solo rejection. ■ Silences solo voice, loses conf. withdraws, --self-blame --reticence --defensive --checks to affirm her decisions. (Near total shutdown). ■ Defiance: voice lessons --Europe --first voice student --campus teaching. --student successes --husband, family proud	■ Smoking as a crutch ■ Depress'n rage/blame --"too old," menopause. --diffidence ■ Losing her vivacity: "Something wrong when you sleep afternoon away." ■ Turn Around: --vivacity --energy --courage once again retrieved ■ Defiance: --voice lessons --Europe --Roots revisited regularly. --Owns source of funds.	■ Accepted at Conserv. Singing career begins ■ Prof. singer bef. marriage "Made good living at it." Multi-media exposure. ■ Province on arrival: --<i>key opera role</i>. ■ Rejected for next role. concentration on ch. altho still sang. ■ Refused to sing in choir ■ Mentor takes charge --40s: first voice st. --50-60: "Am I ever happy." <i>Thriving ever since.</i>	■ Mid-30s: --Confusion --Ch's future, Where was hers? ■ 39: Began to retrieve her singing. --Europe! ■ --Voice Student #1! 47yrs: No degree. --Beginning to feel uneducated when dropped off a letter to an educational institute. ■ 55 Years: <i>Accepted by a highly regarded educational institution in her field.</i> --Admin role --adjudicate	■ Connects with her musical activities

JACQUELINE

Towards an Essence of Self: the Process

<i>Psychic Capital</i>	<i>Problem Challenged Trigger Point</i>	<i>Stepping Stones: Initiative/Intuition 'How' Process: Self-care</i>
■ Knows what wants: "singing is a part of one. You can't <u>not</u> but sing." ■ Always managed some singing around her duty. ■ Respect for others became respect for self: self-care. ■ Generosity of spirit--back to self. ■ Her experiences builds others experiences. Voice coach in home city to students here. ■ Cultural expectancies/inhibitives: turned them around. ■ "Singing my profession/business." ■ Stuck by belief system. ■ "'Attitude'--a part of one's strength creeps into other parts of one's life. ■ Confidence now retrieved.	■ Accommodated and complied. ■ 30s: Being choked by new surroundings expectations. She, thought of as scatterbrained. ■ 38-39yrs: "Gradually moved more and more into my music" and distanced herself. ■ Confusion: "When I lived on the farm I was confused." - Living there still, but no longer confused.	■ Follows dream. Risked economically. ■ Province as married woman. Key operatic role, later audition, always doing some singing. <u>Never</u> lost in a choir. ■ [Kept her personal ID]. ■ Withdrawing into music more and more. Ch. Her priority, music her out for them all. --lessons and not smoking --voice maestro --teaching --trip to Europe on own. --regular visits to roots. --economic independence. --took a stand and set up her campus studio. --personal voice coaching. --administrator --adjudicator in own right. --entering st. who win competitions. --"It's not about winning. It's about experience and learning." ■ Focusing from late 30s builds. --Srengthening arts among every age group. --Encouraging h. to teach.

JACQUELINE

Towards the Essence of Self

WISDOM MAKING— open doors taken	TURNING POINT: wisdom, hope, gratitude	Sociocultural	Community	Positioning Economically
INITIATIVE ■ 18yrs: Con. accepts her: Begins singing Diploma. ■ "Wings" an audition into an opera group in new city shortly after arrival. ■ 15 yrs. Later: Friend/Mentor, --contacts --visiting maestro --European trip on her own. Asks husband to join her. ■ Campus studio despite h's doubts. --key administrative duties --adjudicating --scholarship voice students --"We're ahead of the baby boom. We have all that experience."	■ Profs. at universities. ■ Mentor Friend. --she resumes lessons --insists she teach (sends first student). --that she stop smoking. ■ "Now I know where I am going." ■ Learns from negativities. Had invitation to teach long before but she'd declined. "I'm a singer." Now: "How <u>stupid</u> of me. You learn so much when you teach."	■ 50+" Distanced from farm and home community. --quietly set out on own, "v.v. difficult." ■ As with Malen, set up for herself a separate life of her own that couldn't be tampered with. --quietly --systematically --initially through children. (Not aware then).	■ Pre-marriage and now: Excitement of musical community before marriage. ■ Travelling Prov. with group when ch. small. ■ Campus experience: --growing recognition, --respect --Staff support music society as a whole, and her students. ■ "I was to retire when the children had left and were launched." --Vote the same, --go to same functions, --be a good wife."	■ 50yrs: Housekeeping allowance cut. ■ Realization had to use her own resources and took the courage to do so. ■ Risks from then on once "knew where she was going." ■ Return to roots indirectly.

JACQUELINE

Life Losses: the Role of the Support System

<i>Family</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Networking</i>	<i>Mentors</i>
■ 5yrs: Came from musical family. Music at Conserv. ■ 18yrs: withdrawal of financial support. "You have a good job." Head of Conserv. She studied voice, completed her diploma, there while working part-time. ■ Currently revisiting roots regularly now has independent source of income ■ Children very proud of her and she of them. Mutual musical successes. ■ Husband now taking part. ■ Son's failure at end of Yr. I univ. Suggested music to rebuild his confidence. Now a highly successful professional in the field.	■ From the singing & musical world, known Canada wide. ■ Long-term friendships.	■ Long-time acquaintance and friendship with high-profile professionals. ■ Mentor/friend who connected her with several key teachers incl. ■ European Maestro. ■ Radio connections across Canada. ■ Multi-Campus connections. ■ Connecting still with associates from adolescent period. ■ Member of Associations, and active participant.	■ Head of Music Conserv. – opened door #1 ■ Mentor/Friend of long-standing since her marriage: "Made me feel like singing again." --"Made me see my talent and quit smoking so I would succeed." --"Introduced me to a good voice coach." --"Sent me my first student." – opened door #2 ■ First experience with European Maestro: "A very intelligent musician and I could understand him!" - Greatly influenced her present-day activities.

JACQUELINE

Dream, Catalysts & Triggers, Essence of Self

<u>Dream</u>	<u>Catalysts</u>	<u>Triggers</u>	<u>Essence of Self</u>
■ "I always wanted to be singer."	■ Quit good secretarial position. ■ Initiative, drive, and success: accepted at the Conservatory ■ Opera rejection: concentrated on her family's musical development. ■ 39yrs: Resumed singing career. --gradually took more and more of her Self back. ■ Early 40s: "More and more music to cope." ■ Economics: "Insufficient household funds. Farm doing poorly. I'll have to do it myself." ■ Courage: --first voice st. --Success again! --confidence again ■ 54-55: Against h.'s advice accepts Campus position.	■ Before marriage: Singing both a career and a business. "Made a good living at it." --multi-directional. ■ Marriage: Followed the role's dictates for that time. ■ Recognition that she had a right to her life as well as giving to the family. ■ Return to roots on regular basis for family, voice, and networking.	■ Musician's ego. ■ "All singers have an ego, don't you think?" ■ "Singing is much more than simply notes. It is about behaviour." ■ An 'Attitude'--a sense of oneself. ■ The study of music makes you humble. There is so much to know and so little time to understand what makes great music communicate to us. ■ Shares: other people's children as well as her own. ■ Strength, quiet determination. ■ Vivacious yet detached. ■ "One can not help but sing. It is in me." "My profession and my business."

INTERVIEW WITH IRIS—July 1, 1997
(Italicised words are voice-emphasis words)

Iris, when you were an adolescent and you were asked the question, "What would you like to do when you grow up?" can you recall your answer?

Yes, I can. I had two answers during that time that seemed possible to me. But there was always a third that was unconscious. *The* first one was, I... I wanted to be a school teacher and I also for a *number* of years wanted to be—and this was a result of my fundamentalist Christian influence—but I wanted to be a missionary. I can't tell you *why* because whatever was causing all that for me I don't know, but those were two of my desires during that time. Also, I know the unconscious part of it is that I really wanted to have a loving husband and some active, wonderful children. I wanted *vibrance*, I know that. I *always* wanted *vibrance*.

And what did you eventually become? What did you do with this?

Oh dear! Both of those dreams were put on hold. The one about wanting the happy homelife, that was not, that was *always* alive within me, because I somehow realized the belief that I was capable of making that happen. I eventually decided that I needed to make money and the fastest way to put myself into a money-making position was to take a *business* course and to get into the business world. So that's what I did, and it *did* provide me with a little trickle of money, enough to take voice lessons and enough to get myself established into my marriage.

Why did you take voice lessons, because you hadn't mentioned that you were interested in music a minute ago?

Oh. When I went to the Bible Institute, because I had a search for spirituality since childhood, they had a wonderful music program there and I, within a month or so, was selected as someone who would do well to have my voice trained. So I became one of the soloists in the oratorios that we sang at the College, so I was the mezzo-soprano soloist for the big functions, which was great.

And how long did you continue those singing lessons?

Hmm, well, throughout all the years.

Yes. Who did you start with then?

Oh, it was the music teacher at this little Bible Institute.

But when you came up here?

They started with ? who was considered the great voice trainer in Edmonton at that time and that was about 1965-66. After that I studied with ? and ? and ?, and she took me from mezzo solo to soprano and I was doing quite lyric, light and bright soprano repertoire.

So you did secretarial work, what were you doing?

Oh, office work, yes. I realize how... how by this time I had done some sabotaging of myself. My dreams, and then the *real life* aspect of survival. Those two didn't fit together very well so I opted to buy time, get a trickle of money and that was the secretarial route.

And you were thinking of going back to school then already, or not?

I *always* had a desire to learn more, more in the line of trying to figure out the meaning of life.

Yes, okay. Were you actually involved in performances down here, when you came to Edmonton?

Oh yes!

Or in oratorio? What did you do with your voice training?

Well, I joined a church choir, and I was the soloist there for about 24 years and I was also with the Edmonton Opera, which has turned out to be about 32 years. And I did a lot of singing at weddings and freelance work throughout the city for quite a long time.

So primarily solo more than chorus work.

Well, I would say....

...about half and half...

Well, my world was music to a great extent, it was lots of voice.

How long did this continue? How did your life evolve from adolescence then through the years?

Evolve from adolescence. Um...

Let's say you're in your early 20s now.

Well, without giving any deep forethought to that exact question, it was certainly, certainly an evolution. Because being thrown into the working world, wanting to sing, wanting to make more out of life, also with certain active hormones and wanting to have a... a partner,

the evolution happened through my job and my circle of friends at that time. But I'm not sure I really understand what you mean in your question.

Okay, what, how did you live your life in your early... say your early years, your younger years, after adolescence, your younger adult years? What did you do? You said you hoped to go to school, or be a missionary. Instead, you took secretarial training and went into that but then you found yourself also taking voice training. So you were, doing part, I think probably of what you had intended to do, but what did you do during your young adulthood, how did it evolve?

The... The doing was very much on the level of surviving? Always knowing that there had to be more to life than what I was experiencing. Always thinking that in the future I wanted to *find* more but at the moment I needed to keep plodding ahead with what was in front of me. For many years I described my feelings (and I came across a, a journal that I wrote, it would have been 15 years ago). And I compared my emotional and psychic state to be still in the egg without having *cracked the shell open*. And I now know that there was certain truth to that analogy, that metaphor, because now I know that I am out, the shells have fallen away and I am now a growing new being. But a feeling of constraint? A feeling of knowing that whatever it is, the purpose of life, I haven't yet come face to face with it.

So that would have been in your early 40s, that recording in your journal?

Yes, yes.

And what did you do then, say, up from, say, your adolescence... When you left your adolescence, let's say from the age of 20 to... to that point in the journal. Do you remember what you did in your 20s and your 30s?

Well....

How did your life...

A spiritual quest, a belief in myself, a belief very much that with my husband (who was a *really nice guy*) that somehow the two of us would hand-in-hand make this dream happen, which was growth spiritually. I had *lots of hope, lots of hope*, and lots of *trust* in him and trust in my concept of God. And great love for my little children and a vibrance, always knowing that I was still in this egg. A contradiction, and yet it sure fits my talk about it right now? So what did I do during those years? It was... I kept living in some sort of a strange dream.

How old were you when you married?

I was 25.

So you were a secretary until then? You were in Edmonton until you married?

Yes, I was a secretary, doing that type of clerical work, for about 4 years.

And then how long before your children were born, and what type of lifestyle did you have in those early married years?

Okay. My first child was born a year and a month after marriage and we lived on one salary, and it was not a large salary. So, it was very much having inexpensive but good times with friends, going to the public parks, doing fun things that didn't cost much money. Can I answer further to this?

Yes.

Simple, simple enjoyments which I had been taught from my childhood were meaningful enjoyments, the world of books, reading to the children, reading the kind of literature that was character building and I was always on a search to find that... in an age-appropriate level for my two little boys. And being, doing crafts and creative things, teaching the children. I very much launched into... into mothering and nurturing.

And you helped out in schools then too? Did you do much volunteer work or?...

... At that time there was not the... as open an invitation to the mothers to do volunteer work in the schools, I think it was still during the time that there was more money?... before the cutbacks.

Now when was this...

...was this in the 80s or the 70s?

Our child started school in 1972.

Yes. So what did you do for your self?

Oh, sing.

Yes. So what were you involved in? Still, were you in the opera then, or, and soloist in the church?

In the opera; soloist in the church, benefit kinds of concert things, doing a lot of weddings throughout the city. I would be referred by my voice teacher... it seems to me as if that was mostly it. I was so busy with singing.

And did you stay in, have you always lived in Edmonton since you moved here?

No. When my husband was accepted into a medical college, which was in 1974, then we moved the entire household to Saskatoon where we were resident for 4 years while he completed his Doctorate.

So that would have been interesting for you, wasn't it?

Oh, yes.

Did you work then too?

I was not employed. We had two little children. I still continued singing. It was a decision between the two of us that because my husband was a student, that we would not send the children to daycare, that I would not come home tired from work, but rather that we would survive on some savings from the sale of our house and I would be, do the mother job and the *encourager* of the student, which I took on *absolutely*, as a... with, with almost a spiritual type of zeal to encourage my husband through. I used to know he was in an exam, and I would, I would pray for him many times while he was busy writing the exam. That would be one indication as well as a lot of typing of his papers and proofreading and cheering him on.

You said you made the decision together and you were very happy with that, that decision that you'd stay home?

At that time? *Yes.* Yes, my feelings of... of... responsibility to the children, knowing that our little sons needed to feel *much* loved, that they needed to be *taught* at home daily. I very much believe in the values of my mother and of my parents and my Christian background. I felt very committed in passing on a value system to my children and so, being there for them, doing the homemade cookies and just lots of homemaking and mothering.

Did they start school there?

Yes. Yes, our firstborn started grade one, and so did our second child, 3 years later.

Hmm-m. So did you make friends with the university people and entertain, and the church people as well?

Yes.

So you built up quite a friendship circle...

Oh yes, got well received in the church, and friends through the college.

Did you continue opera there?

There wasn't an opera company in Saskatoon at that time so I got into their summer theatre productions.

Oh, hmm-m.

And actually was asked to do the title role.

Oh, okay! And, and what was, what was this production that you did, that you were asked to do the title role in?

It was the musical *Carousel*.

And did you do it?

Oh yes. Yes, I did it. And now I look back and think that there is an ironic element to it, because Julie Jordan, who was this character, was beaten by her husband—physically beaten—and the way she rationalized it was that it was an *expression* of his love for her, and by her expecting that abuse was transcending into another *whole* element of *increased* spiritual love for him. It was *very much* a message from patriarchal culture that we as women are to take.

You don't think that the writer had his, his tongue in his cheek when he was doing this?

Not in the least! I think, I do not think that... I think the writer was saying that a *really good* faithful woman is going to understand.

That would have been the 1950s era, when that was written?

Hmm-m! Hmm-m. 1940-1950s, I'm not sure of the exact date. Oh yes, that was a strong message.

That was when corporate culture was fairly strong too, wasn't it, business was fairly strong, wasn't it.

Yes.

Well, that's interesting.

Yes. However... however, I look back now and think how ironic it was (laughing) that that's the very role I would play.

So... I hadn't thought of that! I must take it out and watch it.

The traditional, the *first* one. Apparently now there is... there have been some changes...

The first one might... might give me some good insight into the North American, let's say the USA culture of that time.

The Eastern US culture.

Okay, right. Oh, that's good. Okay. How long were you in Saskatoon?

Four years.

And then what happened?

Then...

...About what age...? and then what happened for you? About what age would...?

About how old would I have been?

Were you in your late 30s?

Thirty to 36.

Oh yes, okay.

Then we moved to Vegreville, where my husband had a job. We were there for 2 years.

Yes. And how did you like being in a little country town, or a rural centre, probably as quite an important wife?

Well, I now know... Quite an important wife, yes. But I now know that my husband was into an affair with a woman in the office, the veterinary clinic, and... and so his abuse at home was... was shocking.

So it began here?

No, it began before. The control things began before, but... but... a lot of very horrifying things, for me, happened during that two years in Vegreville.

Do you think... I'm going to pop this question in, but do you think, looking back at Carousel and your star role, do you think that somehow you were rationalizing the transcending? Like, how were you coping with the putdowns or the abuse, the control issues that had gone before?

Oh, Tricia, I think I can say that I was well, well indoctrinated into denial, also believing that if I would love him enough and cuddle him enough and make good enough cinnamon buns

and be the terrific Mum, that... and pray enough, that he would become this wiser spiritual person himself, that I had the control. That if I would be really, really wise, and really loving, and would keep my mouth shut *appropriately*, and keep searching on the personal level myself, that *that together* would produce a power that would *eventually* change him.

Now do you think that this was conscious, or do you think that this was socialization?

I think it was socialization...

So you would largely not have known that you were even going through the motions then?

But, but I think it was at a conscious level as well.

Alright!

Because I think I saw it... I think I saw it from everywhere in the culture as well. I think that there were many levels, like an onion almost, of my own denial and my responses to that denial and it could be *all* put into one great big word called HOPE. For me one of the most difficult things was to come to the naked, bony desert realization that I had *no power* over him, but only over my own survival.

Hmm-m, would you care to elaborate on that just a little now or....

Oh, for a bit. And I didn't want to *see* that, I didn't want that to be true.

You still have hope though, you haven't lost your hope?

I don't have a hope than an abusive man who is committed to that—what I call emptiness—I... I know that the *likelihood* of change is dismal, and number two, it's not my business.

Hmm-mm. So, what... what has happened to your hope?

My hope has had to evolve to something new. My hope is now in *me* rather than him, or than in him. It has to be me, and to make that transitional change has been a death and resurrection. *Painful*, painful change. It's coming. I now am starting to more and more have self-esteem and seeing value in being my own best friend, and the two of those are self-related, the whole thing.

Was it... Okay, it was difficult to shift, I'm gathering it was difficult to shift the hope from the 'we' to the 'me'...

Oh, yes!

...or from the 'you' to the 'I'. Can you tell me why that would be?

Hmm-mm. (Reflecting, long pause here). Because I felt so little. Looking at it very honestly, I felt so, so little inside, so fragile inside, like such a tender little flower.

Had you always felt that, if you look back on your adolescence?

No! No! In my, in my childhood years I felt like quite a young strapping plant.

Hmm-mm. So when would that have diminished so you got smaller and smaller?

I believe now that that happened during the years of my marriage whereby I was subtly being controlled.

Now then, moving to Vegreville, how did you live there? What was your life... what did you do with your life there? Your husband was having an affair, you said.

He was having an affair...

You knew about it?

I found him and his girlfriend together at one time but I can now look back and see that... the denial was big, because I didn't want to see what I'd seen and I minimised it... We bought a house with money from my family, and I took a job to pay back my family for that money they had lent to me. So I was very busy doing *shift* work and...

Secretarial work again?

No! I got on with AGT as a long-distance telephone operator. That's what they had in that town, I just took what they had, so... so I was doing mother-wife things and singing again, driving into Edmonton for voice lessons and singing in the little church there, the little United church.

In Vegreville.

Hmm-mm, in Vegreville. Leading the children's choir, doing solo work.

Oh yes. Did you conduct the... okay, you led the children's choir...

Yes.

They had another conductor, a music director?

Yes, hmm-mm.

And you were the soloist there?

Oh, lots. Yes. A lot of soloing, yes, hmm-mm.

What did you do about this fear then? Did you do anything here or did it seem to subside?

There was *great* anxiety I had in the marriage and I always wanted for us to go to marriage counselling, and my husband didn't want to do that. He resisted and said we didn't have the money and I took some of my singing money, and in particular I remember it was money I had earned singing at a funeral and I convinced him to come into a marriage counselling session.

A funeral, money from a funeral.

Money from a funeral. Oh, yes. (Both laughing)

That's alright.

Yes. But that was not helpful.

No?

That session only put me into more despair because it was such an *unhelpful* session. I'm *sure* that the counsellor was totally overwhelmed at what he found. It was a man who now I believe did not have very good counselling skills, did not have the concept of power imbalance and didn't have an idea in the world what to say to us.

So what did you do when... when you felt it wasn't going anywhere?

Well, I remember leaving that office feeling defeated.

Hmm-mm. And then went on with your life in Vegreville or what did you do?

Hmm-mm, yes. We eventually bought our practice, and then left Vegreville.

And you continued much the same lifestyle you had before? Did you get a job here now?

I worked in the practice.

Oh, the same one as your husband?

Hmm-mm. I was... I did a lot of the work in the front office, working with clients, working with animals, the drug sales people, accounts payable I did...

...This was his own practice?

Oh yes! It was. We both worked together.

To get him on his feet?

Hmm-mm. Yep!

Hmm-mm, right.

So my focus again was... was our *mutual* success as a couple.

Okay, and this was in your 38th, 39th year?

Hmm-mm. Yes, it would have been.

Yes. And then what did you... How long were you there in the next location?

We had the practice for 11 years.

Oh. And you lived there all that time?

Not quite! Because when our firstborn got old enough to go to the university, I had the idea that we should move closer to the university...

Yes.

...also by this time I had come into feminist counselling and decided that this, that this relationship... I was beginning to understand the dynamics as I had *never* before, realizing the control issues and what effect that had on my mental health, my physical health, and what it was doing to the children. And so I started to make plans to get out of this.

And so how did you come by this feminist counsellor? How did you get to learn about feminism even? What were...

Well... this agency was at the YWCA. It was not advertised as feminist counselling. It was a group for battered women. And I called an Edmonton Agency through the Yellow Pages and was told about this place at the Y. And since I had to go down to the Federal building a lot with papers from the practice, I stopped there because it was close by and just popped in and the counsellor wasn't even there. But they gave me some reading material, and that was how it started.

I take it then that things were worse by this time for you to take that initiative?

Yes. Yes, it got, it got *so bad* that I was, I was, I couldn't hardly think straight any more, and I felt like I was going crazy and nuts.

Hmm-mm. So when did you move into the... you took the... you dropped by there, were you taking sessions when you actually moved into the city?

I had already been for... We moved into Edmonton in, in 1986, and in 1985 I started the counselling at the Y.

Were you in your early 40s then?

Yes, I was 44.

Okay, so you had quite a number of years.

Yes, yes.

And up to that time of 44, you were still helping in the practice?

Yes!

Now, what transpired as a result of... when you started in this counselling, was that when you got the impetus to move into the city?

I saw that, that either I would stay in this marriage and basically lose my mental health and lose any feelings of joy in life, or I had to get out. My husband went for therapy and during that time I had hope that he was changing, however, I now know that, that a woman who is being abused in her relationship either stays in it and takes what that brings, or gets out, because I now know I could not change him and I *did* not change him.

So you are bent on changing yourself.

Oh, yes, that too. I wanted growth for me. I felt that I was in a strangling curtain. I wanted out of my eggshell to use that same metaphor.

Hmm-mm. So, so you moved into the city now...

Yes. Yes.

...what were some of the ways that... one, one was coming in and moving into the city.

Yes. Yes.

Your son was going to university. That was the rationale you gave?

About coming into the city? Yes.

What were you doing for yourself all this time? Sitting in those... going to those counselling sessions, what, how did that help you? What were you doing and how did you start to move into the hope for yourself rather than the hope of a relationship?

Well, I stayed... It was with a counsellor who was then doing a Masters degree and, and very open to sharing what she was studying, which I believe was one of the *great* gifts to me. I had a *thirst* for more in life, and I would *soak* up and try to *assimilate* what she was telling me. And she had great patience in the way that it was taking for such a life change. Our whole value system changed, that takes time. Also, I had the opportunity to work as a volunteer.

Did you take it, or make it, or did she give it?

She offered it.

Okay. To anyone in the class, or...

To quite a few...

...or specifically to you?

Well, to quite a few, but she gave me the opportunity to *co-lead* in her battered women's groups.

Okay. So she had identified you already.

Well, I... I suppose she saw that I had a floundering thirst and so I wanted to stay involved with her in the capacity of volunteer work, because it was like my umbilical cord to new learning. I was afraid I would fall back and I saw only dismal existence if I didn't keep seeing this light, which I now know was self-empowerment.

Hmm-mm. Now this was after you'd done your group sessions that she, that you then elected to volunteer as a co-leader...

...hmm-mm.

...for new groups?

...and I worked in her.. At the Y I did quite... eventually crisis calls and clerical work, and did a lot of work in the office as a volunteer.

Hmm-mm. And what was that doing for you as a person? How many years were you

involved in that? Three...

Hmm-mm.

...2? What were you doing as a person? Do you remember how you were feeling as you were doing these with her?

Yes, I can! I *always* had a... a desire that one day I'd know more. One day... This was just a little, delicious taste, and I wanted *more*. I look back and I... I see the courage in myself, and I realize that that was following a little thread of hope, so obviously I had not given up on myself. And during the time that my husband was in therapy and *Changing Ways*, I believed that he had his little genuineness. He seemed to be making improvements and so I had hope that this work in this relationship, the companionate spirit and the form of warmth for our children, that that could be a reality, that that really was within grasp.

And was it looking as if it was becoming reality?

It did. Now I don't know how much denial was still cutting in for me there. But I really did see *that there was hope!* And I would be so *grateful to God* because I thought there had been a miracle so this was on a *spiritual* level as well as cognitive, and on the feelings level of hope and warmth and new trust and, and... I learnt to love this man again.

Hmm-mm, hmm-mm. And what... how do you find your life evolving? Is that what you did then on a continuum?

Okay. What that did for me was... the music in my life began to hold a little less importance. And my quest for new learning began to grow and I knew on a gut level in time that I needed to study formally.

Okay. Now I'm just going to stop there for a minute. Hold that thought on study for me, but I have a question. You said music began to hold less importance for you. There are two questions, one was music, have you ever thought of music as being an escape?

Absolutely.

Okay. And you might want to elaborate on that. And the second question is, was there ever a time when you had so much despair that you couldn't bear any music? So first of all you thought, yes, music is an escape, so I would appreciate it if you could elaborate on that.

Yes. I can say that, that my music did a number of things for me. One was, it was *one* place where something of me could *actually* amount to something. I had people from the church for instance, who were like a little fan club and I worked to please them. I studied and I really tried hard to sing beautifully. I wanted those people to enjoy what I could do. It was the feeling of being able to make a contribution, and from the spiritual level as well as the

artistic level and the... Another part was that the escape to a world in the opera where there was fantasy, where there... where I had identity. (Well, being a doctor's wife, that puffed up significance). However, on my own, without. I wasn't basking in his glory, but I was an identity. Also the fantasy, the excitement of the stage and the makeup and the costumes. All those things were, I see now, a *coping strategy*. You had another question about whether music became painful?

Whether you ever got to the point of such despair that music, there was a period in your life when there was no music.

Yes. Yes.

And how long about would that have been? And when?

When I realized that all of my hopes and dreams of my entire life were crushed, smashed and obliterated and that I was left like pieces of rubble and broken earth. When I realized that I had *no* choice but... if *any* self-esteem lay in me at all, I needed to serve divorce papers to that man who was in the process of killing me inside. Crushing my soul and spirit.

Hmm-mm. And about how old would you have been then?

Well, let's see. The music? About... well, I didn't want to sing. I didn't want to hear any kind of music whether it be opera or classical or jazz or country, or anything. I wanted silence. It only intensified my pain...How old was I?

Approximately.

In my early 50s.

And for how long did that last?

Sometimes I *still* have to turn the music off. And once in a while... But *now* it feels different! I can listen to... I need my Mozart fix every morning. (Laughing). But, but there are times when I have had maybe some experience such as a letter from the lawyer, or when my *reality* hits me, and it comes again as a pierce of pain where I...

Can you recall how long that, that absolute silence away from music was? Was it two months, six months, a year ?

It was about 2-1/2 years that music was painful. I did some opera.

Oh, you still sang in operas?

Yes. Yes. But it was not a joy. I knew that I needed to keep pushing on. But it was not a joy.

Okay. Now I am going to back up, because I went ahead a little. So you came into the city, and I asked you some of the things you did to move yourself forward as a result of your coleading, and I said... Well, did you stay with that, is that where you are at right now, or what happened? Did anything evolve and if so, what evolved as you got a little more energy and more hope? What did you set out to do?

As I worked with women, I realized that I *had* something I desired to give, and that what I had to give had value. And some of it was based on a life experience and my *esteem* started to grow, little by little, and I developed a desire to learn how to do this, not only in a volunteer capacity or in a lay person capacity, but I wanted to study formally. So, I took the bull by the horns and enrolled into some courses which, for *me*, was a *huge* step!

And why was that? Because obviously you had the smarts.

Yes! Yes!

So why was it such a huge step?

My esteem was low. I believed that this was beyond my ability. I think I have been... One of the tragedies of abuse is that it crushes the self—being the self. And so, in one way or another, people who are abused live life with less vibrance than they otherwise could.

So you started into your studies.

Yes.

How did you get to feel about yourself, did you have some downs as well as ups, and did you have some failures, or...

I had very few failures. I was consistently delighted in what I *discovered* for myself. I was *amazed* at the way I could keep at it! I was *amazed* at how *interesting* I found the various texts and material as though it was quenching a thirst. I developed a huge desire to travel, to see with my own middle-aged eyes...

Hmm-mm, and this was when? Would this have been in your 50s now?

Hmm-mm, hmm-mm.

Okay.

Well, I think I was 48 when I... when I went with you to Russia. So that was already

happening to me before then. A huge thirsty quest, so I was breaking out of my eggshell and that was coming through following that thirst for more in life and which was also the formal studies. I was making marks that I didn't know lay within me. I would *enjoy* the professors, giving up some of my singing seemed less of a sacrifice as I was embarking on new adventures. I was finding that *people* in my life were *respecting* what I was doing, and conversations with my children were becoming more, had more content, and we would discuss some of my studies and theirs at that time.

So this was about the time then when the eggshell, when you started to peck the eggshell?

Yes, hmm-mm.

...or had the eggshell actually broken and the chicken was out now?

Yes. (Both laughing.)

It came with the counsellor, was it?

Yes, yes. I must say that was the prelude... (still laughing).

Okay. So what has transpired, from the time you started back at school and realized you could pull those grades!?

Okay. From then till now, my world has changed in *many* ways!

And how old would you have been then?

When I started going back to school? About 48. And I am now 56, and so in these 8 years I am now a single woman, and I am doing remarkably well as I *learn* to be independent again. I believe I'm not living in denial as I face my reality. My way of viewing myself has changed. My way of viewing people has changed. The *love* I have for my friends has deepened and become ever so much richer than it has ever been before. My *concept* of God is different! My empathy for pain is different. My social, my level of social and cultural sensitivity is deeper and bigger—different. I am now what could be called a feminist? I will say though that I believe I am a... a feminist of love and maybe a...

Meaning?

Meaning? I see a very close comparison to the teachings of Christ and the basic principles of feminism.

Okay, the gender then, the gender male/female dimension of this? Feminist in viewing that, how, if you are following the Christ, or seeing the similarities of Christ. Then how do you view say the male in the scheme of things?

Oh (large reflective sighing)

...as a feminist of love?

I see that, that... that the gender role for men is a tragedy for not only women but for men. I see tragedy! I feel sad for them. And my heart aches for their pain and for, certainly, the pain that the women are subjected to as a result of the whole patriarchal system.

Now a question. I think I... you have shown you have achieved aspirations, ambitions and have realized some of your potential, haven't you.

Yes.

I think you have shown that you have had obstacles placed in your way and I think you have shown how you have handled them. How do you handle some of the stress? How do you handle stresses? (quiet laughter) Because you obviously went through some huge, stressful moments to get from... particularly during the last 8 years. What were some of the things you did?

Okay. Three things come to mind and there may be more as I think about it some more. I learnt to journal. I learnt to pour out my feelings to people I could trust. And I am forever grateful to those precious, beautiful people who were there for me. I also gave myself permission to cry and to face my losses and to feel them deeply and... and cry from my soul for as long as I needed to in a session and totally, physically, so that after one of those sessions I didn't feel very well.

Hmm-mm. Did you use counsellors at all, go to the doctor at all?

Oh yes! I did all those. Yes. I had my medical doctor who is supportive and I had counsellors. However, I, I believe that the counsellors were great. However, the ones that were not there, it wasn't their job, they weren't getting a pay cheque for listening to me, those people I had *another* level of healing with even though counsellors had their place and still do.

Hmm-mm, hmm-mm. Looking back on your life, have you had any mentors or role models, even perhaps literary figures, that you admired, learnt from, thought I would like to become like that, or have you largely just evolved yourself?

Role models.

Yes.

I... up to... I have a few that come to my mind right now. My mother is one, a woman of wisdom and courage, a woman of love. Right now she would say, "Iris, go for it, take that

Masters degree, work with the abused women. Always do it with the love of Christ." That's what she would have said. Another role model, and a very current role model, is a woman who heads a crisis centre. This woman has come through huge, extensive, trials. And she has shown agency to a degree that I stand with hat in hand and her sense of humour, her openness, humility, love of nature, I see her as having come through the valley of the shadow of death. I see her as a role model and I am grateful.

Now that's the agency she's shown?

Yes. That's... She has... she has constructed or been instrumental... Actually it was her dream to make this Agency a reality.

Okay. Do you have any others in mind?

Yes. ...As with my Christian tradition, and again through my mother, to her, Christianity meant the *teachings* of Christ, *not* the dogma of the church, *not* the patriarchal *structure* of organized institutions but a personal relationship with the spirit and a high respect for the teachings of Christ. So I look also at... at what was that value that brings the ultimate in meaning and suffering, which was... which was... And so I can say that my... a role model for me would also be those challenges, those challenges of care and opportunity and the teachings of Christ. So I guess Christ is a role model. Also, one more I want to mention, Nellie McClung, social activist. The woman who did so much for our suffrage used a sense of humour to accomplish many things, and I see that making an impact for self, for ? and good relationships can be well lubricated with humour. So that I would say that *her* humour, according to the readings I have done.

Hmm-mm. I haven't read any of her yet, so I don't know much about Nellie McClung.

Oh, I don't think her *writings* were terribly remarkable but what she *did* was remarkable.

Hmm-mm. What are you presently involved in?

Well, I'm counselling battered women this summer. And my plan is to begin my Masters' degree in clinical social work in September however long that needs to take.

Two last questions. About time, hey? How do you feel about your life right now is the first question. Looking back on your adolescence, even, and your dreams, how do you feel about your life right now?

Some mixed feelings. I'm *sad* that so much time was spent (I won't say wasted because that's a judgment on my life) but spent in suffering with an abusive man. However, I am grateful for everything I've learned. About... about my life? It's worth it. And I almost choke when I say that, because I *know* there's more suffering ahead. But it is an acceptance? And I believe that you've got to give out. It really is, on a deep level, a privilege to walk

this journey.

Do you think you are accomplishing some of the dreams that perhaps you had as an adolescent?

Yes. Hmm-mm.

What about the teaching?

The teaching?

Weren't you once upon a time going to be a teacher? Is that anywhere around...(Joyous laughter) ...on the horizon?

Yes. It's not in a classroom but it's one-to-one counselling. It's the sharing knowledge. It's not that 'Expert' role so much as woman to woman sharing our knowledge. And so while I might have more information that they find as teaching, I am learning their teaching.

And the final question, How do you see your future? How do you see yourself in the future?

I see myself as growing old with some dignity, of knowing that I have been a female in a patriarchal culture that is *not* user friendly for women *generally* speaking, and I have seized the challenge to survive and given it a hell of a good try! And I want to continue that as the future comes, as the... As my body ages, I want the spiritual, the soulfulness, to go on, to increase and realise my self.

Are you starting to thrive now, do you think? Are you on the way?

Yeh. I'm... I've started. I have lots to go...

Do you have any further comments that you would like to add, that perhaps may have been overlooked?

I can say that having this opportunity to talk about myself, I have mixed feelings about that as well, that whole thing that women shouldn't be self-absorbed, that women shouldn't be self-centered, and for me to have talked this much about myself, to know that I have bought into that myth because I feel like I have over-indulged today! (Laughing). And I see humour about that. But if my life story can add anything, anywhere that helps. And that's it for me.